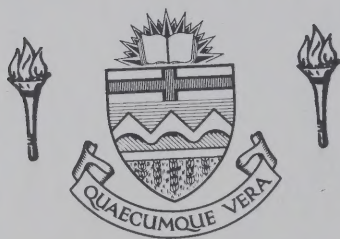


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PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES'

PROGRAMS IN ALBERTA, 1974-1975

by



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A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Parent-teacher relationships have gained increased recognition during the last decade and have become a subject of widespread interest and concern in Alberta since 1973, when mandatory parental involvement was introduced into Early Childhood Services' programs.

This study is concerned with a range of communication practices which include or have potential for including all parents, not merely those who are active participants in programs.

The intent of the study was to document the range and extent of communication practices between parents and teachers in Early Childhood Services' programs during the 1974-1975 school year and some influences upon them. It was further proposed to determine the opinions of a selected number of parents and teachers about their communication and some factors relevant to parent-teacher relationships.

A sample of teachers in one hundred and six randomly selected Early Childhood Services' programs throughout the province, was involved in a mail questionnaire survey and teachers and twenty-five percent of parents from six of the programs participated in interviews.

A mail questionnaire and an interview schedule were the main instruments used for data collection. The mail questionnaire was designed to determine the range and extent of communication practices and some influences upon them. The purpose of the interview schedule was to obtain opinions, based upon experience, about communication and factors affecting parent-teacher relationships.

Written evaluations, and more popularly conferences and program visits were initiated by teachers for purposes of informing parents about the

child's progress. Lectures by guest speakers, workshops, large group discussions and newsletters, which were influenced by parents, were most commonly used for informing of child development. Varied orientation procedures, visits to the program and active involvement served in the majority of programs to inform parents about the program. Informal contacts with individual parents, whose purpose is not defined, occurred most commonly at parents' meetings, before or after school, at local stores and during teachers' visits to childrens' homes. Phone calls were received at centers and more frequently at teachers' homes. House visits were of minor significance. A range in the type and extent of communication practices, impersonal to personal, minimal and extensive existed.

While the statements of persons interviewed are not generalizable, some common patterns were evident. Persons expressed favourable attitudes towards communication, based on personal experience of a positive nature. An open door policy which permitted communication had resulted in observable positive outcomes for parents, teachers and children. Attitudes and behaviours of school personnel were considered to be of major importance in creating an atmosphere conducive to parent-teacher relationships. Together with a range of practices, a range in the extent of communication between individuals was evident.

The implications of the study may have relevance for the Early Childhood Services' teacher, adviser and the teacher-educator.

Questionnaire data implies that the Early Childhood Services' teacher is faced with the major role and responsibility for initiating contact with parents, for a variety of reasons and in a variety of possible ways;

none of which is the only acceptable way. It can be expected that practices and relationships will vary with individuals, situations and purposes.

In an area of practice which is not static and where no one policy exists, varied persons will have influence.

Interview data based on the direct experience of individuals was most valuable in raising questions, issues and topics for further study, and outlining factors and problems in the establishment of parent-teacher relationships.

Opinions suggest a changing open door policy at the level of early childhood services, with beneficial outcomes for parent, teacher and child; resulting from a variety of types of communication and in a variety of types of relationships.

Such policy may be dependent upon the teacher and may have been influenced by a change in societal expectations since the inauguration of Early Childhood Services. While teacher education may play a role and problems in communication may be surmountable, personality and attitudes may inevitably affect all parent-teacher relationships and practices.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Background to the Problem

The last decade has witnessed efforts to foster increased and improved communication between home and school. The two institutions have repeatedly been urged to enter into a partnership--an ultimate goal being to maximize the educational opportunities for the child. A barrage of literature has advocated the benefits of home-school cooperation, exhorted parents and teachers to increase their contacts and offered practical suggestions for this purpose.

"There is a new, sharp awareness that had not existed before: Parents and teachers must work together. The school without parents, the school for children alone, fools itself" (Hymes, 1975, Preface).

The trend to develop a "parent-teacher partnership" (Gordon, 1970) can be seen to have its roots in a number of significant recent occurrences:

1. Educational research which has revealed the impact of varied home factors on the development and progress of the child, has resulted in wider acknowledgement of a need for parents to be involved in, or supportive of the continuing educational process once the child leaves the home setting. Of particular significance in this respect, is research concerned with the effects of parental attitudes and expectations (Central Advisory Council for Education, 1967; Kellmer Pringle et al., 1966; Douglas, 1964; Rupp, 1969).
2. Legislation by some governments has placed specific demands

upon parents who desire their children to take advantage of educational services (Government of Alberta, 1973; Office of Economic Opportunity, 1967).

3. Compensatory education programs and innovative projects which have reported to have successfully incorporated parental involvement as a program component (Gordon, 1970; Gray & Klaus, 1970; McCarthy, 1969; Weikart & Lambie, 1968; Willmon, 1969), or parent-teacher interaction as a goal (Green, 1968; Young & McGeeney, 1968), have provided models and incentive for others to initiate parent-teacher cooperation.

4. Changing patterns of authority have caused increasing democratization of education (Hess et al., 1971; Saxe, 1975), and some disenchantment with existing educational services has brought pressure on parents and community to show more concern.

5. Increased provision of educational services and soaring educational expenditure have led to political pressures for community interest in and understanding of education (Goodacre, 1970).

Statement of the Problem

In reviewing the research on home and school relations, Sharrock (1968) noted that although research had increased since the mid-sixties, the area dealing specifically with types of contacts between home and school and their extent and effectiveness remained relatively unexplored.

In Alberta, in 1973, the Early Childhood Services' branch of the Department of Education affirmed a belief that one institution operating in isolation without the support of the other is ineffective, by

legislating a parental commitment to participatory involvement as a requirement for approval and financial support for Early Childhood Services' programs (Government of Alberta, 1973). To the time of this study however, inspite of the mandatory involvement, there had been no systematic research related to either the range, extent or effectiveness of parent-teacher contacts of any type, in Early Childhood Services' programs.

It was hypothesized by the researcher at the time of the study, that the parental involvement which had been introduced by Early Childhood Services two years earlier, was being narrowly interpreted to mean primarily participatory parental involvement in the program. It was futher hypothesized that such involvement was necessarily limited to a segment of the total number of parents and that attempts to involve all parents at that level could have negative implications. As the researcher was interested in the entire range of parent-teacher contacts which did or could encompass all parents of all children in Early Childhood Services' programs, "communication between parents and teachers" perceived as a broader concept, was selected as the topic and title of research.

Purpose of the Study

It was the purpose of the study to survey and describe the communication practices of teachers and parents in Early Childhood Services throughout the Province of Alberta, and to determine any significant influences upon parent-teacher contacts. Such data would be ascertained from responses to a mail questionnaire and would relate

to practices during the 1974 to 1975 school year.

It was further proposed that the study would reveal a limited amount of data concerning the effectiveness of communication and factors affecting the development of parent-teacher relationships. Such information, representing the opinions of parents and teachers of six diversified programs, would be accumulated during interviews with the researcher.

Research Questions

The following questions were posed as research questions:

1. What is the range and extent of communication practices used by parents and teachers in Early Childhood Services' programs?
2. What are some factors which influence communication between parents and teachers?
3. What are the opinions of teachers and a random sample of parents in six, selected programs, concerning their communication during the 1974-75 school year?
4. What are some specific factors perceived by parents and teachers in the selected programs and based upon their own experiences, which have relevance to parent-teacher relationships?

Significance of the Study

Early Childhood Services' policy has focused considerable attention on parent-teacher interaction. Since the inauguration of the branch much discussion has revolved around parent-teacher relationships. Many questions generated by the public and by educators

in general, in addition to those of parents and teachers directly involved in Early Childhood Services' programs, remain unanswerable in empirical terms, as there has been no supporting research.

"At this point in our educational history, the climate of opinion favours the discussion of new methods of collaboration between teachers and parents and the enlargement of the parents' place in the life of the school. -If this development is to be built on firm foundations, it is essential that it should be supplemented by research" (Sharrock, 1970, pp. 118-119).

It is important that parents and teachers in Alberta look critically at the objectives, methodologies and outcomes of all levels of parent-teacher interaction, and necessary that research be conducted in order to document the evidence and determine whether or not the motivation for interaction, processes and results are indeed in the best interests of the young child's education.

It was anticipated that as a result of the questionnaire survey it would be possible to document the range of communication practices during the 1974-75 school year and present some reasons for their existence. Such documentation would serve as a summative evaluation of parent-teacher contacts and could be of interest to, or have implications for future decision making for Government policy makers, for teachers concerned with interaction or for educators involved in the preparation of teachers for Early Childhood programs.

It was anticipated that the statements made in interviews, by individuals with personal and recent experience with parent-teacher interaction, would raise additional questions or reveal pertinent issues which could have application to further research in the area of parent-teacher communication.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study the meanings ascribed to certain terms were as follows:

Early Childhood Services (ECS). A branch of the Department of Education of the Government of Alberta, inaugurated in 1973 for the purpose of establishing and coordinating health, educational and social services or activities for young children in Alberta.

Early Childhood Services' program. A program for children aged four and a half years to five and a half years, approved and funded by Early Childhood Services.

A community operated program. A program under the jurisdiction of a private non-profit making agency or individual, approved and funded by Early Childhood Services.

A school board operated program. A program under the jurisdiction of a School Board, approved and funded by Early Childhood Services.

Early Childhood Services' teacher. An instructor with a major responsibility for the implementation of the childrens' program.

Early Childhood Services' consultant. A person hired by Early Childhood Services to act as an adviser to Early Childhood Services' teachers, parents or local advisory committees.

Parents. Parents or guardians of children attending an Early Childhood Services' program during the 1974-75 school year.

Local advisory committee (LAC). The policy making body of the Early Childhood Services' program, consisting of a majority of parents of children served by the program and representatives of local community agencies.

Early Childhood Services' coordinator. The appointed chairman of the local advisory committee.

Communication. The complete range of verbal or non-verbal contacts and/or interaction initiated or engaged in by parents and teachers, for the purpose of conveying information, ideas or attitudes.

Limitations of the Study

Data was limited to the responses of teachers in ninety-six programs who completed a newly designed questionnaire and statements made in interviews with teachers and twenty-five percent of parents from a selected sample of six of those programs.

It has been assumed that meanings ascribed to the questions by the respondents, in both the mail questionnaire and the interviews accord with those of the researcher and that the responses accurately reflect the actual communication practices. It has further been assumed that statements made as a result of analysing data from the mail questionnaires are generalizable to the wider population.

Organization of the Study

Chapter one has provided the reader with an introduction to the study. It has delineated the problem and introduced the background to

it. The purpose of the study, the research questions to be answered and the significance of the research have all been stated. Terminology has been defined and the limitations and assumptions underlying the study have been outlined.

Chapter two presents a review of the related literature in the form of a summary of the historical development of parent-teacher communication, a discussion of the focus of the literature and evidence of the range, extent and effectiveness of the broad area of communication, in addition to individual forms of communication.

Chapter three which describes the research design, includes a description of the sample and the procedures used for its selection. It provides a description of the instrumentation to include the purpose of, and the rationale behind the questionnaire and the interview schedule. Finally the procedures for the collection and analysis of the data are discussed.

In tabular and written form chapter four reports on the findings of the study, based on the responses to the questionnaires and interviews.

Chapter five concludes the report with a summary of the study, the conclusions, implications and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2

RELATED LITERATURE

Chapter two, which provides the reader with a review of the related literature begins with a historical overview of the development of parent-teacher communication. The historical overview is included in an attempt to place parent-teacher communication in ECS' programs during the 1974-1975 school year into context. It precedes a general discussion of the literature related to the topic, which reveals the two most common approaches--methodology and research. Evidence of the range, extent and effectiveness of parent-teacher communication is included in a survey of the literature concerned with, (a) communication in its broadest sense, and (b) individual aspects of communication.

Historical Overview

Introduction. Educational practices are never static. Change occurs as a result of the interaction of human beings with each other and with their environment. Hypotheses are formulated, recommendations made and changes in practice occur. New courses of action are evaluated and the cycle of change repeats itself. Home-school relations, particularly within the last decade, have been subject to such change.

In order to put parent-teacher communication in ECS' programs during the 1974-1975 school year into perspective, it is important to look at the historical background of parent-teacher relationships, with emphasis on the chain of events since the sixties.

Much of the related literature is of British or American origin.

It is only very recently that Canadian practice has received recognition in print (Stamp, 1975).

ECS' programs, being both community operated and under the jurisdiction of school boards could be influenced by practices in parent-teacher communication at both the pre-school and elementary school levels.

Traditional parent-teacher relationships. The concept of parent-teacher communication has not been completely alien during the course of history. Sharrock (1970) in a historical review, quoted an opinion expressed by the headmaster of the Merchant Taylors' school, as early as the sixteenth century,

"Seeing that the schoolmaster...is no absolute potentate in our commonwealth, to dispose of people's children as he pleases, but only a counsellor to act along with the parent, if the latter is willing to take advice, I should wish, that in order to have this duty accomplished, parents and teachers should not only be acquainted, but on friendly terms with each other" (p.60).

Richard Mulcaster's recommendation did not necessarily receive widespread support at that time, or for many years following. Over many years following the establishment of educational services, though individuals may have shared a conviction that home-school cooperation was desirable, the two institutions were generally regarded as two separate and independent entities. The teacher was viewed as an expert providing a specialized service which parents were unable to provide.

"A decade or more ago, the parents of children in an early childhood program were related to the teacher in a manner most characteristic of the client--professional relationship found in the medical profession. The profession (in this case the teacher) knew what was best for the child and told the parents

and the child what the appropriate treatment (here, an educational program) ought to be" (Cowen, pp. 4-5).

Any attempts to include parents were usually for the purpose of improving conduct or attendance, as excerpts from a school log book reveal,

"25th Jan., 1863. Had a case of untruth. The girl's father called and was willing she should be punished.
2nd Nov., 1865. Sent word home that a boy had run out of school. Received word back that I was to "hammer" him (p. 24).
24th March, 1882. A few parents were summoned this week for the irregular attendance of their children" (County Borough of Middlesbrough Education Committee, 1961, p. 29).

It is only within the last decade that a movement has emerged to intensify cooperation between the two institutions (Weber, 1970), and now, reference to a "partnership" (Gordon, 1970) between home and school is not uncommon.

At the pre-school level parents were first introduced as participants in the educational system with the establishment of the parent-cooperative nursery school. The first recorded evidence of such an endeavour in the United States, was in 1923 (Evans, 1975).

At the elementary school level a Home and School council was established in England in 1929 and during the 1930s progressive schools, recognising a need for parent-teacher cooperation were forming parent-teacher associations (Cowen, 1966). The Minister of Education, shortly after the 1944 Education act, considered it "unwise to try to establish a uniform system of parent-school links" (Sharrock, 1970, p. 67), but approved of the extension of parent-teacher associations. It was not until 1956, that the National Federation of Parent-Teacher Associations (NFPTA) was established (Goodacre, 1970). Parent-teacher associations provided opportunity for a formal link between home and school, based on the school. The extent of their influence and their effectiveness

was later to be questioned.

In 1946, the National Union of Teachers approved the formation of parent-teacher associations and informal contacts between home and school. Similar attitudes were revealed in an opinion survey by Wall (1947), which indicated that an overwhelming majority of teachers approved of home-school cooperation and informal methods of implementing it. Hyme's text, Effective home-school relations, published in the United States in 1953, paralleled this thinking, but the practices recommended remained relatively alien to practices in the field. Major changes were occurring however in reporting procedures, where greater attempts were being made to initiate two-way communication between home and school.

Factors leading to changes in parent-teacher relationships. During the sixties a number of overlapping sociological, historical and political factors had an accumulated effect of particular significance to home-school relationships, with considerable impact on practices during the late sixties and early seventies.

Growth in research placed emphasis on the importance of the child's environment (Hunt, 1961) and his early years (Bloom, 1964) to his future development and progress at school. This gave rise to demands for additional opportunities for young children and at the same time recognition was given to the importance of parents and parental attitudes in the educational process. Parent-teacher cooperation began to receive greater recognition at national levels and in varied spheres of influence.

In England the formation of a Pre-school Play Group Association had the effect of increasing the number of play groups, all of which included

the participation of parents as organizers and implementers of programs. The Plowden report (Central Advisory Council for Education, 1967) did much by its recommendations, to generate enthusiasm for and stimulate the further development of home-school relations at the elementary school level. It gave support to the theory that a change in parental attitudes towards education could lead to an improvement in the child's level of attainment (Douglas, 1964; Schiff, 1963). In 1968 there was a merger of all existing organizations concerned with home and school, in the establishment of a new Home and School Council.

In the United States the introduction of research stressing the importance of the child's environment and early years was emerging at the time of the national endeavour to "wage a war on poverty." Project Head Start, an outcome of the Economic Opportunity act, made provision for four and five year olds whose socioeconomic status predicted failure or only marginal success in elementary school (Klein, 1971; Office of Economic Opportunity, 1967). The programs which began during the summer of 1965, all included the active participation of parents as a requirement for funding. Similarly with Project Follow-Through, which commenced in the fall of 1967 for the purpose of providing continued instruction from kindergarten to grade three (Egbert, 1971), and with the establishment of Parent-Child Centers, a downward extension of Head Start and Follow-Through programs (Honig, 1975). This mandate for parental involvement set a precedent for the participation of parents in early childhood programs and gave birth to a vast body of literature which was to present models and provide incentive for others to initiate parent-teacher cooperation.

Pressures from without the educational system were being felt for increased participation. Changing patterns of authority leading to increased democratization of education and increased demands for the public to be involved with education were apparent. The publication of books such as Up the down staircase, Our children are dying, 36 Children, The way it sposed to be and later How to change the schools revealed some growing disenchantment with the exisiting educational services.

In England alternative organizations to the original parent-teacher association based on the school were formed. The Associations for the Advancement of State Education (AASE), which covered the area of local education authorities and were linked nationally through the Confederation for the Advancement of State Education (CASE), made varied efforts to inform and involve the public in education. The Advisory Centre for Education (ACE), whose membership was primarily middle class parents with an interest in State Education, was formed in 1960 and concerned itself with the practicalities of education. Such organizations supposedly reflected democratic control of educational policy at the local level.

Increased educational provision and soaring expenditure brought political pressures on the general public to acknowledge their rights as taxpayers and show concern for education. At the end of the sixties educational expenditure in Britain was reported to be six percent of the gross national product and in excess of defence expenditure for the first time in history (Goodacre, 1970).

From within the educational system also, pressure was exerted

for a more open door policy.

An era of increased parent-teacher cooperation. During the late sixties and early seventies considerable interest was generated in parent-teacher cooperation. The benefits of cooperation were predicted and practice was urged by governments, school systems and individuals. Gordon (1970) classified parental involvement according to five hierarchical levels, (a) parents as audience, (b) teachers of the child, (c) volunteer aides in school, (d) trained aides in school, and (e) participants at the decision making level.

"At this point in our educational history, the climate of opinion favours the discussion of new methods of collaboration between teachers and parents and the enlargement of the parents' place in the life of the school" (Sharrock, 1970, p. 119).

However because evaluation of the practices of parent-teacher interaction was minimal Sharrock continued,

"If this development is to be built on firm foundations, it is essential that it should be supplemented by research."

Introduction of ECS. ECS has been inaugurated during this era of pressure for increased parent-teacher cooperation. The goals are identical to those of Head Start programs (Government of Alberta, 1973; Klein, 1971) and parental involvement is mandatory. With the demands upon parents to be involved in decision making roles as LAC members and to account for time spent in active participation in the form of a log, it appears that the aim initially was to involve parents at levels of involvement uppermost in Gordon's hierarchy.

General Description of the Literature

As noted previously much of the literature concerned with parent-teacher relationships has originated in Britain or the United States since the mid-sixties. (Stamp, 1975) notes that many Canadian innovations fail to receive publicity beyond their own communities. Such literature is contained in texts on the subjects, texts on early childhood education (Evans, 1975; Hess & Croft, 1975) magazines, journals and research reports. An increasing number of organizations concerned with home-school links have contributed to the growing body of literature, through publication in their associated periodicals and newsletters.

Impact of the trend to develop parent-teacher cooperation has been felt mainly at the pre-school and elementary levels, and to a much lesser extent at the secondary school level.

Literature related to parent-teacher communication falls into two major categories--methodology and research.

Methodology. There is a vast body of literature of a rhetorical nature, which deals with practical considerations for promoting effective parent-teacher relationships. The focus may be on techniques for specific aspects of communication (Gotkin, 1968; Marion, 1973) or the more global area of communication (Broome, 1974; Hymes, 1975).

Practical suggestions are offered to educators of teachers in training, practising teachers (Heffernan & Todd, 1969; Heinz; Sayler, 1969; Mok, 1964). The responsibility for initiating communication is seen as a function of any or all of the above, though more often that of the teacher.

A growing number of descriptive reports of successful practice appear in the literature. Conclusions are frequently based on subjective opinion rather than empirical data. "I can think of many instances when a child's performance in school has improved as a result of parent-teacher involvement" (Aland, 1974, p. 79). Reported success of practice in one setting does not necessarily mean its successful application in other settings. "In my situation, considering my individual needs and abilities, these means of communication proved most effective" (Fedderson, 1972, pp. 75-79).

Outcomes of increased parent-teacher interaction, frequently in the form of support for developing cooperation, are presented. Such statements present a range of positive benefits to be derived from home-school interaction and may be the result of research findings or may be based on the assumptions or convictions of individuals or groups. "The interaction of home and school is the key to educability" (Sharrock, 1970, p. 9). "The home and school working together can achieve far more than either party working alone" (Central Advisory Council for Education, 1967, p. 37). "Children benefit when school and home have a good relationship" (Marion, 1973, p. 223). "Parent participation and cooperation in school affairs lead to pupil achievement, better school attendance and study habits and fewer discipline problems" (Schiff, 1973).

Research. Research approaches vary to include pure research, experimental projects with research components and developmental projects with evaluative reports. Research reports, a result of the interest or concern of Governments, school systems, universities, programs or

individuals inevitably lead to recommendations and changes in practice. The volume of research while lesser in quantity than that concerned with methodology has increased, particularly in the area of parental involvement, with the thrust for its consideration in the late sixties.

Areas of research which have the most relevance to this study are the range and extent of parent-teacher communication and its effectiveness. In 1970 Sharrock (1970) reported, "the extent and effectiveness of the various types of contact between homes and schools is a relatively unexplored field" (p. 45). As practices increase there is an increase in evaluation and discussion of the effectiveness of parent-teacher communication. In reviewing the literature no attempt has been made to separate effectiveness from the range or extent of communication practices.

The Range of Parent-Teacher Communication

Research concerning communication in its broadest sense is limited. Much of the related research deals with practice in parent-teacher relationships and the opinions of parents, teachers and principals concerning their preferences for contacts. There are a few attempts to include the extent of practice. Such data is generally obtained through mail questionnaires or interviews. In addition to those which merely document practice, surveys may be associated with attempts to improve communication and evaluate the outcomes.

One of the most extensive surveys of parent-teacher communication, parts of which have since been replicated on a smaller scale (Bynner, 1972) was that conducted by the Plowden committee at a national level,

in England in 1964 (Central Advisory Council for Education, 1967). Three thousand two hundred and thirty-seven parents of children in maintained primary schools formed the sample. All were interviewed in their homes by social service interviewers during a five week period, in June and July, 1964. Amongst other topics, responses to a structured and detailed questionnaire revealed information concerning practices and parental attitudes towards relationships with teaching staff of the primary school children. Similar information was sought from teachers and head teachers, by use of mail questionnaires. The recommendations resulting from this major survey have had considerable impact on research and practice in home-school relationships in Britain, and continue to do so.

Green (1968) and Young & McGeeney (1968) both describe attempts to improve the parent-teacher contacts in a school and to document the outcomes. Similarly Sharrock's research (1970) was based on the assumption that improved home-school relations might influence the attitudes, behaviour and attainment of pupils and was a third phase in a larger project to investigate this theory. It was intended that data obtained from parents of first year pupils in two secondary schools would be useful to school staffs in making changes and improvements. Some open ended questions were incorporated into a primarily closed form of questionnaire which revealed parental opinions about, (a) aspects of school life which were of interest to parents, (b) school reports and the information they should contain, (c) parents' interest in school activities, (d) interviews with school staff, (e) preferences for methods of meeting staff, and (f) preferences for helping with school

activities.

Surveys to document communication practices in school districts were conducted in Cincinnati Public schools (Midwest Administration Center, 1968) and in multiunit schools in Wisconsin (Saxe, 1974). The information was sought from school principals in the latter survey.

Sloan (1973) used a questionnaire to survey three hundred and fifty families in an elementary school in Toledo, to obtain information concerning the actual and preferred ways in which the school communicated with parents. A survey on a similar scale, of parental opinions concerning school policy and practices in a secondary school (Gilbert & Reid, 1972) revealed parental opinions towards some aspects of communication; reporting procedures, attendance at conferences and availability of counselors.

Kelly (1967) conducted an exploratory survey of both communication practices and teachers' attitudes towards parent-teacher relationships. Five hundred teachers in Dublin city responded to a questionnaire survey which sought information concerning, (a) the form and extent of existing parent-teacher relationships, (b) the existence of parent-teacher associations or groups, (c) the attitude of teachers toward change in parent-teacher relations, and (d) the form of relationship with parents which teachers preferred. Information related to a six month period in 1966. Comparisons were made between relationships in different residential areas. There was no elaboration on the form of contact other than the fact that it was in or out of school. The extent of parental participation was determined by a Likert scale to indicate that most, some or very few parents had been involved.

A survey including some evaluation of the effectiveness of contacts was associated with the Banks Street Follow Through program and was carried out by parents (Report of Follow Through Parent Interview Project, 1973). Eight hundred and ninety-six parents were interviewed to determine, (a) the degree and quality of the relationship between home and school, (b) the effectiveness of the staff in providing services to families, and (c) a measure of parent participation.

Fedderson (1972) described his individual experience in establishing effective parent-teacher communication in a kindergarten program in Tucson, Arizona. Communication was observed to be of two types, that which communicated to and that which communicated with parents. Communication to parents included notices, letters and newsletters and that with parents sharing information at meetings, discussing the child's work and making assessments.

There is not always a clear differentiation between school-initiated communication and parent-initiated communication. It appears that in a majority of studies reference is primarily to the former. Saxe (1975) discussing three of the above studies commented, "community initiated communication was seen to be relatively neglected and new channels will need to be devised" (p. 183).

Formal associations. There is some documentation of the existence and practices of formal associations linking home and school. Green (1964) estimated the number of parent-teacher associations in England, to be five hundred and fifty-five. The Plowden report (Central Advisory Council for Education, 1967) reported that seventeen percent of primary

schools in the national sample in 1964 had parent-teacher associations but it was noted that these were not necessarily the best means of fostering close relationships with the school.

Spence (1964) in a survey of such organizations in Roman Catholic Schools in Britain attempted to determine not only the numbers but also the factors which influenced their formation. It was concluded that regional culture and the attitudes of head teachers were primarily responsible.

Following the recommendations of the Plowden report for increased home and school cooperation, "Bringing in Parents" (1967) documented a range of aims and outcomes of activities undertaken with success by parent-teacher associations throughout Britain.

Individual Aspects of Parent-Teacher Communication

In order to obtain more background of parent-teacher communication it is necessary to look at the literature concerned with specific or isolated aspects of communication. In reviewing the literature, a variety of sources were used to determine the possible scope of parent-teacher communication. Broome (1974), based on the recommendations of the Plowden report (Central Advisory Council for Education, 1967), presents a comprehensive plan of action in diagramatic form in which a school may develop parent-teacher contacts, and the Department of Education and Science (1968) records evidence of such contacts. Gue (1969) listed a range of ways in which the school might initiate contact with parents. Hymes (1953) dealt with each form of contact in some detail.

Each individual form of contact is discussed in its order of

appearance in the questionnaire devised by the researcher for use in this survey.

Assessing, Recording and Reporting the Progress of the Child

Written evaluations. Traditionally parents and teachers have engaged in communication concerning the progress of the child in school. Presentation of a written report card has been recognised as a role of the teacher and the progress of the child is one aspect of school in which parents have been invited or expected to be participants. "Reporting pupil progress to parents is an accepted part of the school function which affords regularly recurring opportunities for developing rapport with parents" (Heffernan & Todd, 1969, p. 35).

The Plowden report (Central Advisory Council for Education, 1967) showed evidence that parents surveyed were interested in knowing about the progress of the child and would welcome a written form of report at least once a year.

D'Evelyn (1965), of the opinion that reporting was of crucial importance hypothesized that the method was significant. There has been much criticism of traditional reporting procedures, and their effects on parents and/or children (Johnson, 1962; Lawrence, 1950; Mok, 1964). Jackson (1971) presented the results of a survey of reporting procedures. Of three hundred and sixty-five report cards submitted for analysis ninety percent were reported to show evidence of bureaucratic form filling procedures, telegraphic language, negative, insensitive and judgemental comments, with no continuity from one report card to the next.

Although such a survey does not provide unbiased data, it does raise questions about existing practices and the ability of report cards to supply adequate or accurate information, or foster communication for the purpose of benefiting the child. Jackson made recommendations that reports must provide a true record of the past and suggest a plan for the future, at a time when the plan can be implemented by parents, teacher and child. Use of students' work to provide a measure against his own past achievement rather than against that of other children was suggested.

Saxe (1975) has cited newly designed report cards which are detailed, but which in his estimation are totally incomprehensible to the lay person.

A personalized report card characterized by lack of comparison and grading was used experimentally in selected schools in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Triplicate copies were to provide for continuity (An evaluation of a special progress report, 1971). The report card was evaluated by parents and teachers who judged it to be successful. Department of Education and Science (1968) gives examples of personal letters with comments used by schools in England.

Jackson & Marsden (1962) and Green (1968) report on experimental changes made in traditional reporting procedures and their outcomes. In an increasing number of schools parents are invited to respond to the written evaluation. Sixty percent of parents in Green's experimental study, responded to an opportunity to make written comments on their child's report card (Green, 1968).

Uneasiness about the effects of less than satisfactory written

reporting practices has led to recommendations for alternative forms of reporting, especially at lower levels.

Conferences. Oral reporting of progress has been recommended as a supplement or alternative to the written report card. Lindsay (1970) reported that the majority of parents in a Scottish community depended on a report for contact with the school, but where personal contact had been experienced it was preferred.

In a national survey of teachers in the United States in 1969, just over forty percent used scheduled conferences for reporting (Lewis, 1970).

Butler (1974) has hypothesized about the advantages of certain times and conditions for conducting conferences. Stern (1960) reports that in Poland conferences are considered to be sufficiently important that working parents are allowed time to attend, without loss of salary.

In recognition of the fact that parents are not always able or willing to attend conferences at school, recent attempts have been made to counteract non-participation by teachers' going out to meet parents in the home or work environment (Central Advisory Council for Education, 1967). McGeeney (1968) introduced home visiting as part of an experiment to improve home-school contacts. In some experimental situations home liaison teachers have been appointed, whose function is to establish personal contact with parents in the home and/or release the teacher for this purpose (Halsey, 1972).

Assessment and record keeping. Enthusiasm was expressed by Californian teachers for conferences as a means of reporting, but they

expressed inadequacy in their ability to handle contacts effectively (Heffernan & Marshall, 1955). D'Evelyn (1965) believed it necessary for teachers to prepare for conferences. Evidence of a child's progress in the form of test information, observation or work was recommended. Brady (1968) reports the use of videotapes in parent-teacher conferences. A questionnaire is presented by Bailard & Strang (1964) which could be used as a means of evaluating the conference.

Opportunities Provided for Parents to Understand more Fully the Development of their own Child and Others

Observing the child in the program. Parents' understanding, insight and knowledge may be enhanced by first hand observation of the child in the program. Lindsay (1970) reported that where the parent in her study lacked personal experience of education, he was expected to have less confidence in his own ability to estimate the child's educational status and to rely more heavily on the school's evaluation.

Parent observation groups are used as a means of helping parents deepen their understanding of the child in the program in pre-school centers in New York, Maryland, Baltimore, Seattle, Washington and California (Taylor, 1967). Under the guidance of a trained teacher, parents are encouraged to watch and discuss the child's activities. Observation booklets are a means of assisting parents to observe the child in Government Play Centers in New Zealand (Grey). Heffernan & Todd (1969) present a parent's guide to observation.

Opportunities for understanding child development. In addition to opportunities to increase understanding of child development by

observation at the center, other means; parent libraries, bulletins and newspapers are practised.

Group discussions provide opportunities for parents to discuss child development experiences or problems with other parents and/or professionals (Aland, 1974). Group sessions to which guest speakers are invited, workshops, question and answer panels, and audio visual presentations are all reported means of involving parents for the purpose of increasing parents' knowledge and understanding of child growth and development.

Opportunities for Parents to Learn More About the Curriculum

Much of what happens in schools today may be alien to parents as a result of changes in educational practices and the movement of people from smaller centers and other countries, to schools in large urban centers. Studies assessing the extent of parents' knowledge of and/or interest in education or schools reveal a knowledge deficiency but also reveal their positive concern and interest.

The need for better methods of communicating information to parents was stressed by Jackson & Marsden (1962) and reiterated in the Plowden report (Central Advisory Council for Education, 1967). Of seven hundred and thirty mothers who were surveyed in the Greater London area (Parents' Views on Education, 1961), forty-two percent were reported not to know enough about their child's school and to be wanting more information. Thirty-five percent considered they were not told enough about education. Banfield et al. (1966) conducted a questionnaire survey of five hundred families in three contrasting

socioeconomic areas in Britain to discover and compare the extent to which parents were informed about trends and organization of education in England and to determine their concern, interest and degree of faith in the educational system. They concluded that the majority though concerned, especially with their own child rather than the broader issues in education, were not given enough information and wanted closer contact with the schools. The school was seen as having a responsibility to inform, "very obviously educating parents is an important function for both teachers and administrators in the educational service" (p. 66).

Orientation procedures. The importance of the first link between home and school and the process of adjustment to the school, by both the child and the parent has been shown by Murton (1971), in a series of case studies. The process may be much more traumatic and may take much longer than is generally supposed.

There are various reports of orientation practices for parents and children. The Plowden Committee (Central Advisory Council for Education, 1967) described the practice in some schools of inviting parents and younger siblings to Friday morning assemblies. Following the assembly younger siblings are permitted to visit the classrooms of older family members, while the head teacher talks to parents. In describing a special group of infants, it reported that less than half the children visited their class and over one third of parents did not see the head teacher before the child's admission. A more recent survey, in a deprived area found that the great majority of mothers had visited the school before the child's entry on a regular

basis (Department of Education and Science, 1968). Some head teachers invited parents to bring the children as often as possible.

In Britain, there are reports of schools in areas of declining population, which set aside a room for the informal use of mothers and children, who belong to such organizations as 'Mother and Toddler Enterprise'. Such opportunities allow younger children gradual acquaintance with the school environment.

Many parents receive written communication from the school prior to the child's entry on a regular basis. In some situations principals or teachers phone and/or visit the child's home (Stamp, 1975).

Knowledge of the program. Parents have been invited to visit schools on special occasions; open days or evenings, plays, concerts, services or programs, sports events, parent-teacher association meetings, fund raising or social events. The Plowden committee (Central Advisory Council for Education, 1967) reported that primary schools in England, organized on average, six or seven occasions each year when parents could visit the program and social occasions accounted for half that number.

Because of a belief that many parents have little idea what the schools are trying to do and are therefore unable to give the support needed for effective learning Educational Priority Area projects "looked for ways to explain the schools aims and methods" (Halsey, 1972, p. 117). In Birmingham and Deptford, home liason teachers were appointed. Home visiting was practised and school visiting was encouraged.

An attempt was made to improve the knowledge of parents in a deprived area by Young and McGeeney (1968) who posed the question "How can parents take an interest in what the child is doing at school, and

give the support which is needed, unless they can know and understand what is happening and the reasoning behind it (p. vii, Forward). Open meetings, talks with teachers, meetings on teaching methods and home visits were all included in the changes made in communication practices in the school.

Pourtois (1974) involved in action research concerned with the development of a methodology of education which would involve parents in the child's education, recommended that instructional talks be avoided. Pourtois experimented with a discovery method, where the parents' practical experience was not divorced from educational theory. One head teacher attempted to actively involve parents in childrens' learning by organizing a series of evening sessions in which he attempted to create a similar atmosphere to that which existed for children during the day (Keast, 1969).

Holmes (1969) suggested that parents be encouraged to visit other programs as a means of comparing, contrasting and understanding their own.

Newman (1971) described her attempt to familiarize parents with the aims and goals of a new pre-school program in New York, by involving parents in a series of eleven planned workshops and home supported activities.

Printed information appears to be widely used for purposes of conveying information to parents about existing programs, new methodologies or programs. Bulletin boards in parent spaces (Marion, 1973) may be used to display materials of interest to parents. Feddersen (1972) used notices, letters and newsletters as means of

communicating to parents. McGeeney (1968) and Marland (1973) have revealed some, not unbiased, evidence of notes to parents of an inferior quality "awkwardly drafted and amateurishly typed", or "startlingly peremptory and discourteous". Eichelt (1973) describes an attempt to improve and evaluate the change in an individual school newsletter. Pupils, parents, teachers and administration personnel who evaluated the more appealing format containing samples of childrens' work, appropriate jokes and articles of current concern by administration, judged it to be an effective means of improving school-community relations.

Local newspapers, radio and television are used to convey information. This corresponds with the current effort to inform and include fathers, as well as mothers, other family members and community in the activities of the school. Carmichael (1972) outlines ways of involving fathers in a program. Education "shop experiments" have been designed and implemented with success to answer questions on education (Pulham, 1974).

Active involvement. As a result of recent interest in the area of parental involvement the literature is prolific, particularly in the United States at the pre-school level. Reasons for involving parents and the outcomes of involvement are many and varied (Honig, 1975), but are significant to this study only to the extent that they have implications for parent-teacher communication. This significance may not always be made explicit, however it is assumed that involvement necessitates some type of parent-teacher interaction.

Literature concerned with active parental involvement is introduced in this section with reference to three types of involvement, volunteer aides, trained aides and decision or policy makers, and with reference

to recent thinking about parental involvement (Gordon,1976).

The incorporation of volunteer aides into the school, has been motivated by a number of reasons; to benefit child, parent, school or because of pressures for parent participation--in each case however, communication is assumed.

Parents were involved in a program for multiage groupings in open schools in New Jersey. Parent participation, considered necessary for the development of the program and a climate for improved learning, found its expression in a citizens' advisory council, mini teas, parent workshops, individual parent-teacher conferences, home visitations, open houses, class visits and an open door policy resulting in increased parent-teacher communication (Home school interaction: Project LEM, 1973). Similar motivation is apparent in the involvement of senior citizens in a volunteer program in a school which was implementing individualized programs for five hundred students. The services of one clerical aide were obviously inadequate. The volunteer program was reported to have "been effective in meeting its original goal: to assist teachers and students in an individualized instruction program" (p. 55).

The goals for the involvement of parents in Early Childhood Services' programs in Alberta related to parents who will interact with children, observe how the program relates to the childrens' needs, and learn more about childrens' behaviour. It has been stated that parents should not be present merely to aid the teaching staff and to provide a needed resource, but also to meet their own needs as parents (Government of Alberta, 1975).

An area of failure reported in a parental involvement scheme (Fryer, 1973) concerned the attachment of a mother to a teacher for general

classroom help. It was hypothesized that some kind of basic training was necessary for the successful implementation of this type of endeavour.

A gradual process of involvement was included in a training program for parents which began with orientation and directed observation, followed by demonstration and role play, then classroom participation with limited responsibility and finally instructional responsibility as permanent assistants (Horton).

The literature reveals different levels at which parents are involved as decision or policy makers, from lip service paid to the concept on the part of school authorities, to complete control.

A Primary School Headmaster (1965) designed an opinion poll as a means of opening up communication in one infant and junior school and allowing all parents an equal opportunity to express their views about certain aspects of school life. The survey provided a measure of parents' satisfaction or dissatisfaction towards the service the school was providing and a potential area for parents to influence decisions.

The guidelines for many government funded programs, as mentioned previously, require potential participants to have a voice in the decision making processes as members of advisory committees. It is being observed that such enforced mechanisms do not necessarily translate into effective communication and action systems for implementing program goals. In a survey of parent center programs conducted by Lazar and Chapman (1972), it was reported that although all but three of thirty-five centers had established advisory committees only eleven were able to report the active participation of parents in regular meetings and decision making.

In his most recent publication Building Effective Home-School

Relationships, Gordon (1976) no longer places emphasis on five hierarchical levels of involvement but rather gives recognition to the existence of different types of involvement all of which are of equal status.

In a scheme for the purpose of improving the progress of children in a school in an educational priority area, Fryer (1973) described an eclectic approach to involving parents. Personal qualities and limitations of teachers and parents, interpersonal feuds between parents, responsibilities of mothers with large families, financial difficulties and full-time work were all seen as "hazards". The extent of participation was recorded. It was observed that "parents" meant mothers only. "The odd father, sheepishly in tow by mother, does not consider children's schooling his province (probably traditional in origin)" (p.36).

The Use of the Center and the Climate of the Center for Parents

Jackson and Marsden (1962) made reference to the sheer social discomfort which kept working parents at a distance. The introduction of a community school concept has attempted to dispel the impression of the school as a building open during the day for childrens' academic prowess. Stamp (1975) has identified and described schools which have opened their doors for community use, enabling persons from all walks of life to feel more at ease in the setting. Midwinter (1974) describing four experiments which could be implemented on a national basis, stated that authorities were asked to do everything possible to extend opportunities for parent-teacher collaboration, particularly through the provision of amenities which would make it easier to welcome parents into the schools.

Marion (1973) presented a number of ideas which could be modified or adapted to enable teachers to prepare a parent space in the center and advised that "if a good home-school relationship is to develop parents need to feel welcome at their child's school" (p. 221).

Based on personal observations of compensatory programs, Jablonsky (1968) arrived at the conclusion that, "Schools which have open doors to parents and community members have greater success in educating children...The children seem to be direct beneficiaries of the change in perception on the part of their parents" (p. 6).

Katz and Kahn (1967) express a theory that there is a direct relationship between the openness of a school and the permeability of its boundaries. Based on this theory, an instrument has been designed (Wiener & Blumberg, 1973) to enable school administrators to determine the opinions of parents concerning the status of their school. The questionnaire elicits parents perceptions of five factors that seem to compose the psychological boundaries of the school and reflect the degree and quality of interaction between parents and teachers.

In determining a measure of parent participation in Banks Street Follow Through programs, it was revealed that ninety-eight percent of the parents surveyed had visited the school (Banks Street College of Education, 1973). Suggestions which were made to aid or encourage parents to visit more readily were: provision for babysitting, arranging a visit and medical assistance. The role of the teacher in making parents welcome was emphasized, "Parents perceive the teacher as not only instrumental in inviting parents to come to the classroom initially, but also as the one who conveys the spirit of welcome and friendliness that makes parents

want to return."

The Accessibility of the Teacher and His/Her Relationship with Parents and Children Both In and Out of the Center

Accessibility of the teacher. "Accessibility of the teacher" assumes initiation of contacts by parents, however this aspect which has been introduced earlier seems to be minimal in the literature.

Midwinter (1974) in reference to a survey of parents indicated their concern for the education of their children, but noted their sense of inadequacy coupled with a trust in the ability of the school to take all responsibility. This seems to lead to their failure to initiate contact with the school.

Kelly (1974) reported that teachers in her study perceived parents as not wanting more contact with teachers than that which already existed.

Relationship of the teacher. Increased communication has caused some critical examination of contacts. Lindsay (1970) remarked that contacts alone are insufficient. "It was thought that certain types of contact might be self defeating if they aroused feelings of bewilderment, insecurity or antagonism" (p. 6). Knitzer (1972) remarked of parental involvement, "when it is good, it can be very very good, but when it is bad it is horrid" (p. 83).

McGeeney (1969) visited thirty schools which had demonstrated that parents and teachers could cooperate. The particular schools visited had been selected as samples of schools with outstandingly good relationships with parents. No common factors were found to account for their keenness to welcome parents, which implied that good relationships

developed in a variety of circumstances regardless of age, marital status, training, previous experience, length of headship or teaching position or type of organization within the school.

As more parent-teacher communication is encouraged and practised and evaluation occurs, hypotheses are formulated concerning factors which affect relationships.

Types of contact between home and school seem to be conditioned by attitudes of both parents and teachers towards communication. Moeller (1971) noted that "the successful parent-teacher relationship is always marked by great sensitivity one toward the other" (p. 40). Lane (1971) stated that the basic requirement for communication "is that teachers and parents see each other as human beings who have similar goals, expectations and feelings" (p. 61).

Sieber and Wilder (1967) conducted a study to examine parents' attitudes towards various teaching styles. The study revealed mothers' preferences for a non-intellectual authoritarian style for younger children contrary to that of teachers. The researchers stated that parental expectations are by no means of minor importance to them and as a result they hypothesized that unless schools are able to legitimate teacher behaviour which is not in accord with parental expectations, or change the role definition in accord with expectations, conflict may result.

Evans (1975) discussed obstacles to effective parent-teacher relationships and hypothesized that they "seem to greatly outnumber the proven methods" for this purpose (p. 347). Initial involvement, mutual intimidation, superior attitudes on the part of teachers,

unrealistic expectations for change, value system conflicts, apprehension about formal evaluation, and a lack of genuine commitment to child welfare were all considered to be problematic areas.

Sharrock (1970) stated that, "in their choice of contacts with parents, head teachers and teachers reveal fundamental attitudes to education" (p. 15). She concludes that it is necessary to study the relationship between home and school...to try to increase mutual contacts without some basis of understanding may only increase existing confusion. Hymes (1975) presents a list of questions to evaluate feelings towards communication and the quality of interaction. Knitzer (1972) believes that some of the potential areas of tension between parents and teachers can be eliminated if professionals are trained to work with parents.

Taylor (1972) appears skeptical of any assumption that effective parent-teacher communication is necessarily a simple accomplishment. He emphasizes the fact that such an endeavour is being attempted "within the context of a complex set of traditions, value assumptions, and attitudes regarding the relationship of the family and society, the individual and the state" (p. 295).

Use of Instructional Materials or Visits in the Home Setting

The literature concerned with home visiting as part of parental involvement is extensive, however its inclusion in this study is concerned merely with any influence on parent-teacher communication.

The need for establishing close links with home has been stressed. Enquiry I (Schools Council, 1968) showed that school staff felt a need for more knowledge about the child's home and background. An investigation

was made to determine the effects of teacher-parent dialogue and contact upon the attendance, behaviour and achievement of economically deprived children in an elementary school in Oklahoma (Shelton, 1973). Low income mothers trained as communication specialists made five visits to the homes of thirty children and were accompanied by a teacher on two visits. The study reported that communication and involvement of families was increased in addition to attendance and achievement of children, though the reasons were not conclusive.

Summary

An attempt has been made in this chapter to put parent-teacher communication in ECS' programs during 1974-1975 into context by reviewing the literature related to the historical development of parent-teacher relationships, particularly as they apply to the pre-school and elementary school levels.

The inclusion of a general discussion of the literature concerned with parent-teacher communication has revealed the existence of two main types, one dealing with methodology and a second with varied research approaches.

Finally, a review has been made of the literature associated with both the global area and specific aspects of parent-teacher communication. It has been assumed that the type of contacts included throughout the review necessitate some kind of communication, however effective. It is further assumed that any or all of the cited communication practices could be prevalent in programs in Alberta.

CHAPTER 3

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The design of the study which is discussed in chapter three includes a description of the sample and the procedures used for its selection. Details of the instrumentation and its development relate to both the questionnaire and the interview schedule. The chapter concludes with procedures for the collection of data and an outline of the method of analysis.

Description of the Sample and the Procedures Used for its Selection

Sample for the Mail Questionnaire

The subjects who participated in the first part of the study, the mail questionnaire, were teachers in a number of randomly selected Early Childhood Services' programs throughout the Province of Alberta, during the 1974-1975 school year. In general, an individual teacher was associated with each program, however where more than a single teacher was involved a random selection of one was made.

A complete list of Early Childhood Services' programs as of April 1, 1975 was obtained from Early Childhood Services. The total population of six hundred and ninety-five programs was stratified (see Table 1) on the basis of community and school board operated programs in six zones (see Appendix A), as defined by Early Childhood Services.

A proportionate sample of one hundred and seventeen programs was selected by application of a random table of numbers (see Table 2). Ten programs used for the pilot study had previously been excluded.

Table 1
Stratification of Total Population

Zone	Community Programs	School Board Programs	Totals
1	9	63	72
2	23	38	61
3	55	217	272
4	41	6	47
5	80	105	185
6	35	23	58
Totals	243	452	695

Table 2
Proportionate Stratified Sample of Programs Randomly Selected
for Participation in the Study

Zone	Community Programs	School Board Programs	Totals
1	2	11	13
2	4	6	10
3	9	36	45
4	7	1	8
5	13	18	31
6	6	4	10
Totals	41	76	117

Of the total number of thirty-six school board programs in zone 3 which were randomly selected for participation in the study, thirty were from the County of Strathcona, Edmonton Public and Edmonton Separate School Boards. Protocol required that permission be obtained to conduct research in programs within these systems. Eleven of the Edmonton Public School Board programs chose not to participate in the study, because of the inopportune time of the year and previous and excessive demands on them to participate in research. The exclusion of eleven programs from the original sample resulted in questionnaires being sent to teachers in only one hundred and six of the one hundred and seventeen programs. The distribution of programs is shown in Table 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Table 3
Distribution of Programs Surveyed by Zones

Zone	Number of Programs (N=106)	Percentage
1	13	12.3
2	10	9.4
3	34	32.1
4	8	7.6
5	31	29.2
6	10	9.4
Totals	106	100.0

Table 4

Distribution of Programs Surveyed by Program Type

Type of Program	Number of Programs (N=106)	Percentage
Community	41	38.7
School Board	65	61.3
Totals	106	100.0

Table 5

Distribution of School Board Programs Surveyed by Zones

Zone	Number of Programs (N=65)	Percentage
1	11	16.9
2	6	9.2
3	25	38.5
4	1	1.5
5	18	27.7
6	4	6.2
Totals	65	100.0

Table 6

Distribution of Community Programs Surveyed by Zones

Zone	Number of Programs (N=41)	Percentage
1	2	4.9
2	4	9.8
3	9	21.9
4	7	17.1
5	13	31.7
6	6	14.6
Totals	41	100.0

Sample for the Interviews

The subjects who participated in the second part of the study, the interviews, were parents and teachers from six programs from the original sample, whose teacher had responded to the mail questionnaire. The six programs, one from each zone, were chosen on the basis of their range of unique and diversified characteristics, varied and interesting communication practices and positive response to the mail questionnaire and/or study.

Selection of programs with unique and diversified characteristics was attempted by securing representation from programs in each of the six Early Childhood zones, each of which had a different consultant. There was representation from community and school board, rural and inner-city, newly operated and well established programs and those with small and large enrollments. The characteristics of teachers in the programs differed to include persons with extensive and minimal qualifications for work with young children, pre-service training from both within and outside of Alberta and Canada, one year and many years of teaching experience and long term community residents and relatively transient persons.

Assessment of programs with varied and interesting communication practices was made by the researcher following close scrutiny of the questionnaire returns. The opinions of Early Childhood Services' consultants were requested to aid in the selection process (see Appendix B) and where advice was offered this was also taken into consideration.

Positive response to the mail questionnaire and/or study was revealed through teachers' individual comments on the questionnaire

returns and/or accompanying letters and enclosures.

Though it was apparent that a selection of persons for interview from programs of this nature could result in statements with a positive bias, it was not considered disadvantageous, since the data obtained could be based on direct experience rather than merely on the hypotheses of those interviewed.

Each of the six programs invited to cooperate in the interviews agreed to do so. Participation in the interviews was invited from the teacher and parents of twenty-five percent of the children in each program--one parent representing each child. Wherever possible one of the twenty-five percent of parents from each program was the chairman of the local advisory committee. Parents were selected by the application of a random table of numbers to a list of families, arranged in alphabetical order.

Instrumentation

Mail Questionnaire

A mail questionnaire designed by the researcher (see Appendix C) was the main instrument for data collection in the first part of the study. Of the existing instruments which were available to the researcher and which had been used in previous surveys of communication practices (A Primary School headmaster, 1965; Central Advisory Council for Education, 1967; Gilbert & Reid, 1972; Kelly, 1967; Sharrock, 1970) none was considered suitable for use in the present study, however reference was made to their form and content.

Comprehensiveness was attempted in the design of the questionnaire through reference to the literature: reports of currently developing communication practices, a range of suggested practices (A hundred ways parents can help a school, 1974; Broome, 1974; Cave, 1970; Department of Education and Science, 1968; Gue, 1969; Hymes, 1953) and the hierarchy of levels of involvement (Gordon, 1970).

The questionnaire was designed to elicit responses from the Early Childhood Services' teachers concerning, (a) the range and extent of communication practices between parents and teachers which occurred in Early Childhood Services' programs in Alberta, and (b) some factors which influenced communication between parents and teachers.

Following a review of the literature the researcher incorporated the following areas as those having major significance to parent-teacher communication:

1. Assessing, recording and reporting the progress of the child.
2. Opportunities provided for parents to understand more fully the development of their own child and others.
3. Opportunities for parents to learn more about the curriculum.
4. The use of the center and the climate of the center for parents.
5. The accessibility of the teacher and his/her relationship with parents and children both in and out of the center.
6. The use of instructional materials or visits in the home setting.

Questions related to the outlined areas were sequenced in the following manner and numbered accordingly:

1. Assessing, recording and reporting the progress of the child: (1-10) written evaluations, (11-19) conferences, (21-22) assessment, and

(23-24) record keeping.

2. Opportunities provided for parents to understand more fully the development of their own child and others: (25-29) observing the child in the program, and (30-33) opportunities for understanding child development.

3. Opportunities for parents to learn more about the curriculum: (34-35) orientation procedures, (36-39) knowledge of the program, and (40-41) active involvement.

4. The use of the center and the climate of the center for parents: (42-43) use of the center, and (44-45) climate of the center.

5. The accessibility of the teacher and his/her relationship with parents and children both in and out of the center: (46-53) accessibility of the teacher, and (54-57) relationship of the teacher.

6. The use of instructional materials or visits in the home setting: (58-62) the use of instructional materials, and (63-66) home visits.

Questions 67-76 were included to provide a profile of factual information about the program and the teacher which could have significance in accounting for differences in styles of parent-teacher communication practices. The questionnaire concluded with a page for additional comments.

Basic instructions for completing the questionnaire which were included on the cover sheet indicated that responses were to relate only to practices during the 1974-1975 school year. For convenience in answering it was designed primarily as a closed form of questionnaire, however some open ended questions were incorporated to accommodate interesting or unusual responses which may otherwise have been omitted.

There was no overall consistency with respect to the type of response to be given to questions--a variety of styles were used.

The following rationale was developed for the inclusion and sequencing of topics in the questionnaire: Of foremost importance and mutual concern to teachers and all parents is the individual child and his progress (Central Advisory Council for Education, 1967). Reporting the child's progress was a topic of primary importance since this is generally accepted as one of the more traditional and widely practised roles of the teacher with respect to parent-teacher communication (D'Evelyn, 1965). Both written evaluations, despite reports of their more formal, impersonal and less effective nature (Jackson, 1971) and conferences, refuted to be more personal, worthwhile and increasingly practised (Lewis, 1970), were considered necessary as topics for inclusion, since both, irrespective of their outcomes, could exist among current parent-teacher communication practices.

The extent to which teachers were able to give credibility to a report was seen to be relevant from the point of view of the quality and acceptance of the reporting procedure by parents. Assessment and record keeping practices were significant as they provide an objective means by which teachers may justify information conveyed to parents about a child.

A recent trend away from a more traditional summative evaluation by the teacher, to a formative procedure involving teacher, parents and significant others (Butler, 1974) was accommodated in questions dealing specifically with provision for parents to observe the child in the program. This was associated with additional opportunities for parents

to develop a greater awareness of child development, through parent programs, which were reported to be receiving prominence in Early Childhood Services' programs in Alberta (Government of Alberta, 1973).

With current attempts to erode traditional closed-door policies and pressures on parents to become more knowledgeable of and supportive of the child's education (Holmes & Masse, 1969), increased opportunities could be expected for parents to learn more about the program and curriculum (Young & McGeeney, 1968). Furthermore, an increase of activities to actively involve parents (Broome, 1974; Government of Alberta, 1973) suggested an increase in parent-teacher communication.

Parents' familiarity with the center and their feelings towards being there, the extent to which teachers are accessible to and interested in parents and children both in and out of school hours and the preferred type of relationship were all seen to reflect attitudes and behaviours which could affect parent-teacher communication.

Involvement with the child's home and family has potential for contributing to parent-teacher communication (Beyer, 1959). Early Childhood Services have given recent support to home programs. Questions concerning the extent to which a link with home and family is attempted by instructional home visits or the provision of instructional materials for home use were therefore considered appropriate for inclusion.

The questionnaire was piloted by ten Early Childhood Services' teachers, who were participating in an Elementary Education curriculum and instruction course, at the University of Alberta: Ed C.I. 344,

Teacher, School and Community Relationships. Based on their suggestions revisions to the questionnaire were made. Finally it was subjected to a panel of independent judges before printing in its existing form.

Interviews

The interview schedule used in the second part of the study was designed by the researcher for the purpose of determining, (a) the opinions of teachers and a random sample of parents in a selected number of programs concerning their communication during the 1974-1975 school year, and (b) some specific factors as perceived by parents and teachers in the selected programs, and based on their own experiences, which have relevance to parent-teacher relationships.

The schedule was compiled as a guide to the researcher (see Appendix D) but questions were structured during the interviews, to take advantage of the leads and unique contributions of individual teachers and parents in the varied programs.

Revisions to the original draft of the interview schedule were made following its submission to a number of graduate students at the University of Alberta and teachers, for comments regarding its face validity.

Procedures for the Collection of Data

Mail questionnaires. The mail questionnaire was distributed to subjects on May 1, 1975 accompanied by a letter of introduction (see Appendix E) and a stamped addressed envelope. Where names and addresses of individual teachers associated with each of the one hundred and six

programs were not included on the list compiled by Early Childhood Services, the information was obtained wherever possible from the Early Childhood Services' consultants of the corresponding zones.

On May 19, 1975 an informal memo (see Appendix F) was mailed to fifty teachers who had failed to respond to the initial request to complete the questionnaire.

Finally on May 27, 1975 a more formal request (see Appendix G) was made to twenty-seven who had still not responded. A duplicate questionnaire and a stamped addressed envelope were included with the request. This final communication was addressed to the coordinator of the Early Childhood Services' program rather than to the teacher, because it was considered probable that he/she, because of an incorrect title or mailing address, may not have received the earlier correspondence. The researcher contacted a small number of teachers in local programs, by telephone and made arrangements to collect the completed questionnaires.

Because of the factual type of information being sought and previous assessment of the reliability of the instrument, following its trial by a pilot group, no further attempt was made to check reliability, by requesting the completion of a second questionnaire.

Interviews. A letter was sent to the teachers of the six programs selected for interview purposes on June 1, 1975 inviting participation in the second part of the study. The letters were hand written and individualized, but the basic information pertinent to the study remained the same (see Appendix H).

Approximately one week later phone calls were made by the researcher to the six teachers to determine their interest in this phase of the study and to make arrangements for interviews to take place if teachers desired. All teachers invited to participate agreed to do so.

In all cases but one, where the contact with parents was made by the researcher, the teacher assumed responsibility for inviting the participation of parents at a scheduled time. A randomly selected set of numbers was provided by the researcher and applied by the teacher to an alphabetically arranged list of parents. In each case the chairman of the local advisory committee was included as one of the twenty-five percent of parents invited to participate (see Table 7).

Interviews were conducted during the third and fourth weeks of June, 1975. The researcher spent one full day in each community, interviewing parents and teachers, individually wherever possible, in their homes or at Early Childhood Services' centers. Where parents were not available for interview, either a substitute was invited or the interview was cancelled. Twenty-one interviews were conducted with a total of twenty-five persons participating. The interviews were recorded using a battery operated cassette recorder which had a built-in microphone.

Following the interviews each person who had participated received a hand-written individualized note of appreciation from the researcher.

Table 7

Persons Invited to be Interviewed Concerning Parent-Teacher Communication

Zone	Teacher	LAC Chairman	Parents	Total
1	1	1	3	5
2	1	1	2	4
3	1	1	3	5
4	1	1	4	6
5	1	1	3	5
6	1	1	4	6
Totals	6	6	19	31

Method of Analysing Data

Mail questionnaire. A needle sort process of hand tabulation was employed for processing the information from the questionnaire returns because of, (a) the relative ease with which it could be conducted, particularly in view of the complexity of the questionnaire design, and (b) its ability "to aid understanding of the interpreted data" (Conway, 1974, p. 135). Frequency counts were made, percentages calculated and the information ranked and recorded in tabular form. While no attempt was made in the analysis of data in this study, to uncover relationships between variables, the data is available and could be utilized for this purpose.

Interviews. The recorded interviews were transcribed by the researcher as soon as possible after their recording. Responses were

analysed to eliminate information not relevant to the topics of concern. Condensed statements were formulated, categorized and ordered according to the frequency with which they occurred. The abbreviated statements were analysed by a graduate student at the University of Alberta and compared to the original responses to determine the accuracy with which the original meaning had been retained.

Chapter three has outlined the research design and the procedures associated with the investigation of parent-teacher communication in Early Childhood Services' programs during the 1974-1975 school year. The sample and its selection procedure were described. In presenting a description of the questionnaire and interview schedule which were the main instruments in use, the purposes and the rationale for their format were included. The chapter has concluded with details of the procedures employed for the collection and analysis of the data.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

In this chapter responses to the questionnaires and interviews are presented. Data obtained from the questionnaire responses of teachers in the one hundred and six Early Childhood Services' programs which were surveyed, is recorded in tabular form, described and analysed. Statements made during interviews between the researcher and teachers, and a percentage of parents in six programs selected from the total number, are classified and ordered according to the degree of frequency with which they occurred. A descriptive analysis of the interview data is included.

Excluded from all data are the eleven school board programs in zone three which were included in the initial random sample, but which chose for a variety of reasons, not to participate in the study. Included in all tables are the responses listed in "Other" categories in the questionnaire.

Questionnaire Data

Distribution of Programs Surveyed and Questionnaires Returned

The overall response to the questionnaire was a return rate of 93.4%. As three questionnaires were invalid, data from a 90.6% return response was used for the analysis (see Table 8).

Questionnaire returns from each of the zones ranged from a return rate of 80% to 100% as shown in Table 8. School board returns exceeded

community returns by 9.1% (see Table 9). Differences between return rates according to zones and program types are shown in Tables 10 and 11.

Table 8
Questionnaire Returns by Zones

Zone	Number Returned (N=106)	Percentage
1	12 (11) ^a	92.3 (84.6) ^a
2	10	100.0
3	33	97.1
4	7	87.5
5	29 (27) ^a	93.5 (87.1) ^a
6	8	80.0
Totals	99 (96) ^a	93.4 (90.6) ^a

^aThree questionnaires were not usable

Table 9
Questionnaire Returns by Program Type

Type of Program	Number Returned (N=106)	Percentage
Community	36	87.8
School Board	63 (60) ^a	96.9 (92.3) ^a
Totals	99 (96) ^a	93.4 (90.6) ^a

^aThree questionnaires were not usable

Table 10

Questionnaire Returns of Community Programs by Zones

Zone	Number Returned (N=41)	Percentage
1	1	50.0
2	4	100.0
3	9	100.0
4	6	85.7
5	12	92.3
6	4	66.7
Totals	36	87.8

Table 11

Questionnaire Returns of School Board Programs by Zones

Zone	Number Returned (N=65)	Percentage
1	11 (10) ^a	100.0 (90.9) ^a
2	6	100.0
3	24	96.0
4	1	100.0
5	17 (15) ^a	94.4 (83.3) ^a
6	4	100.0
Totals	63 (60) ^a	96.9 (92.3) ^a

^aThree questionnaires were not usable

Assessing, Recording and Reporting the Progress of the Child

Written evaluations. 55.2% of the teachers responding to the mail questionnaire reported the use of some type of formal written evaluation (see Table 12). The remainder, 44.8% indicated no use of such a method for reporting progress.

Table 12
Use of Formal Written Evaluations

Use of Formal Written Evaluation	Number of Programs (N=96)	Percentage
Yes	53	55.2
No	43	44.8
Totals	96	100.0

Written comments and checklists as shown in Table 13, rated highest in popularity, being used by 49.1% and 41.5% of respondents respectively. A report card, third in popularity was used by only 26.4% of teachers and in half of those programs it was used in conjunction with another form of written evaluation. Preference for the adoption of one format is revealed by the fact that only 24.5% of the respondents used a combination of two or more types of written evaluation (see Table 14).

The largest number of teachers 41.5% presented written evaluations once a year, 22.6% presented written evaluations twice a year and another 22.6% three times a year, as shown in Table 15.

Table 13
Type of Written Evaluation in Use

Type	Number of Programs (N=53)	Percentage
Written Comments	26	49.1
Checklist	22	41.5
Report Card	14	26.4
Letter	5	9.4
Child's Booklet	1	1.9
Irrelevant Response	1	1.9
No Response	2	3.8
Totals	71 ^a	134.0 ^a

^aHigh totals due to multiple responses

Table 14
Number of Programs Using One Type of Written Evaluation Only

Type	Number of Programs (N=53)	Percentage
Written Comments	12	22.6
Checklist	12	22.6
Report Card	7	13.2
Letter	3	5.7
Child's Booklet	1	1.9
Irrelevant Response	1	1.9
No Response	2	3.8
Totals	38	71.7

Table 15
Frequency with Which Written Evaluations were Presented to Parents

Frequency	Number of Programs (N=53)	Percentage
Once a Year	22	41.5
Twice a Year	12	22.6
Three Times a Year	12	22.6
Monthly	2	3.8
Whenever Needed	1	1.9
No Response	4	7.6
Totals	53	100.0

Assessment. The largest majority of written evaluations, in 86.8% of programs were reported to assess the child in relation to his own previous performance (see Table 16). A majority, 67.9% of teachers used only this method of assessment (see Table 17). 11.3% of teachers reported the assessment of the child in relation to other children in the class, but in no instances was this reported to be the sole method of assessment in use.

The Early Childhood Services' teacher was the most important influence in determining the style of the written evaluations, as reported by 64.2% of the respondents. School boards reported by 18.9% of subjects and former teachers and principals both by 11.3%, were next in order of importance (see Table 18). 47.2% of programs reported the Early Childhood Services' teacher to be the sole influence (see Table 19). School boards were second

in order of importance as a single influence, but were reported in only 13.2% of cases. Only 20.7% of respondents reported two or more joint influences as being significant in determining the style of the written evaluation.

Table 16
Methods of Assessment of the Child's Progress

Type of Assessment	Number of Programs (N=53)	Percentage
In Relation to the Child's Own Previous Performance	46	86.8
In Relation to Standardized Norms	9	17.0
In Relation to Other Children in the Class	6	11.3
Irrelevant Response	1	1.9
No Response	2	3.8
Totals	64 ^a	120.8 ^a

^aHigh totals due to multiple responses

Written evaluations were recently developed, as revealed by the fact that 83.1% of programs reported their development for use since 1970. 34.0% of teachers reported 1974 as the year in which the evaluation had been developed, 28.3% of teachers reported 1975, 20.8% 1970-1973 and 7.5% pre-1970 (see Table 20).

The two most common modes of distributing written evaluations were by the child in 58.5% of programs and at a conference/interview in 52.8% (see Table 21). Single methods of delivery predominated in 79.3% of programs as shown in Table 22. Only 18.8% of programs used two or more modes of delivery.

Table 17

Number of Programs Using One Method of Assessment Only

Type of Assessment	Number of Programs (N=53)	Percentage
In Relation to the Child's Own Previous Performance	36	67.9
In Relation to Standardized Norms	4	7.5
In Relation to Other Children in the Class	--	--
Irrelevant Response	1	1.9
No Response	2	3.8
Totals	43	81.1

Table 18

Most Significant Influence in Determining the Style
of the Written Evaluation in Use

Influence	Number of Programs (N=53)	Percentage
ECS' Teacher	34	64.2
School Board	10	18.9
Former Teacher	6	11.3
Principal	6	11.3
ECS' Coordinator	5	9.4
Grade One Teacher	2	3.8
Parents	2	3.8
Commerical Company	1	1.9
Team Teacher	1	1.9
No Response	1	1.9
Totals	68 ^a	128.4 ^a

^aHigh totals due to multiple responses

Table 19

Extent to Which a Single Influence was Responsible for Determining
the Style of the Written Evaluation

Influence	Number of Programs (N=53)	Percentage
ECS' Teacher	25	47.2
School Board	7	13.2
Former Teacher	3	5.7
Principal	2	3.8
ECS' Coordinator	2	3.8
Parents	1	1.9
No Response	1	1.9
Totals	41	77.5

Table 20

Year in Which the Written Evaluation was Developed
for Use in the Program

Year	Number of Programs (N=53)	Percentage
1974	18	34.0
1975	15	28.3
1970-1973	11	20.8
Pre-1970	4	7.5
No Response	5	9.4
Totals	53	100.0

Table 21

Ways in Which the Written Evaluations were Delivered to Parents

Mode of Delivery	Number of Programs (N=53)	Percentage
By the Child	31	58.5
At Conference/Interview	28	52.8
By Mail	2	3.8
At Graduation	1	1.9
At Christmas Concert	1	1.9
At a Year End Meeting	1	1.9
No Response	1	1.9
Totals	65 ^a	122.7 ^a

^aHigh totals due to multiple responses

Table 22

Extent to Which One Mode of Delivery Alone was Used

Mode	Number of Programs (N=53)	Percentage
By the Child	20	37.7
At Conference/Interview	17	32.1
By Mail	1	1.9
At Graduation	1	1.9
At Christmas Concert	1	1.9
At a Year End Meeting	1	1.9
No Response	1	1.9
Totals	42	79.3

71.7% of teachers spent one half hour or more on average to complete one written evaluation. The largest number, 49.1% of teachers indicated that a report card, on average, took one half hour to complete. To a lesser extent but next in order of importance, 24.5% reported one quarter of an hour, 11.3 reported one hour and a similar percentage longer than that (see Table 23).

Table 23
Average Length of Time Taken by Teachers to Complete
One Written Evaluation

Time	Number of Programs (N=53)	Percentage
$\frac{1}{2}$ Hour	26	49.1
$\frac{1}{4}$ Hour	13	24.5
1 Hour	6	11.3
Longer than 1 Hour	6	11.3
No Response	2	3.8
Totals	53	100.0

Only 7.5% of teachers were allowed any relief time from teaching duties to perform the function of completing written evaluations (see Table 24).

Interviews/conferences were the most frequently used means of allowing parents an opportunity to respond to written evaluations and were used in 88.7% of situations. Space for parents' comments, on the written evaluation third in order of popularity was provided in 22.6% of cases (see Table 25).

Table 24

Number of Teachers Allowed Relief Time From Teaching Duties
to Complete Written Evaluations

Relief Time Allowed	Number of Programs (N=53)	Percentage
No	46	86.8
Yes	4	7.5
No Response	3	5.7
Totals	53	100.0

Table 25

Methods Used by Teachers to Encourage Parental Response
to the Written Evaluation

Method	Number of Programs (N=53)	Percentage
Conference/Interview for All Parents	32	60.4
Conference/Interview for Parents Requesting One	15	28.3
Space for Parent Comments on the Written Evaluation	12	22.6
Written Evaluation May Request Parent to See Teacher	1	1.9
Problems Discussed with Parents Assisting in Classroom	1	1.9
No Response	3	5.7
Totals	64 ^a	120.8 ^a

^aHigh totals due to multiple responses

Only 13.1% of teachers used two or more methods to encourage parental response to written evaluations. In 62.3% of programs conferences alone were provided (see Table 26).

Table 26

Extent to Which One Method Alone was Used to Encourage Parental Response to the Written Evaluation

Method	Number of Programs (N=53)	Percentage
Conference/Interview for All Parents	24	45.3
Conference/Interview for Parents Requesting One	9	17.0
Space for Parent Comments on the Written Evaluation	5	9.4
Written Evaluation May Request Parent to See Teacher	1	1.9
Problems Discussed with Parents Assisting in Classroom	1	1.9
No Response	3	5.7
Totals	53	81.2

Conferences. 72.9% of teachers arranged conferences for all parents as a means of reporting the progress of the child, as shown in Table 27.

Conferences were most frequently arranged in private, on a scheduled open day or evening, this situation being reported by 52.9% of teachers. Second in order of preference, in 28.6% of programs conferences were arranged at a privately arranged time at the center (see Table 28).

Table 27

Extent to Which Parent-Teacher Conferences were Arranged
by Teachers, for All Parents

Conferences Arranged	Number of Programs (N=96)	Percentage
Yes	70	72.9
No	24	25.0
No Response	2	2.1
Totals	96	100.0

65.1% of the teachers who did not present written evaluations arranged conferences for all parents (see Table 29).

79.2% of teachers who presented written evaluations arranged conferences for all parents (see Table 30). This figure is inconsistent with the data in Table 25 which reported that 60.4% of teachers who presented written evaluations arranged conferences for all parents; although the latter discussed conferences merely as a means of encouraging parental response to the written evaluation. In 31.3% of cases conferences were arranged only as a need arose (see Table 31). This information does not tally with data in Table 27, where conferences were arranged for all parents by 72.9% of teachers as the total of the two figures exceeds 100.0%.

Of 65.7% of teachers who were allowed relief time from teaching duties to conduct conferences with parents, 28.6% were sometimes allowed relief time and 37.1% were always allowed time (see Table 32).

Table 28

Conditions Under Which Conferences Took Place, According to Data
Supplied by Teachers Who Arranged Conferences for All Parents

Conditions	Number of Programs (N=70)	Percentage
In Private, on Scheduled Open Day/Evening for All Parents	37	52.9
At a Privately Arranged Time at the Center	20	28.6
At Any Convenient Time	3	4.3
In the Presence of Other Parents on a Scheduled Open Day/Evening for All Parents	2	2.9
At a Privately Arranged Time at the Child's Home	1	1.4
On Day Mother Acts as a Volunteer Assistant in the Program	1	1.4
Weekly Meetings at the Home of One Parent and Child to which 2, 3 or 4 Others May be Invited	1	1.4
Irrelevant Response	1	1.4
No Response	4	5.7
Totals	70	100.0

Table 29

Extent to Which Conferences were Arranged for All Parents
by Teachers Who did not Present Written Evaluation

Conference for All Parents	Number of Programs (N=43)	Percentage
Yes	28	65.1
No	14	32.6
No Response	1 ^a	2.3
Totals	43	100.0

^aThe teacher who failed to respond considered reporting progress
to be important

Table 30

Extent to Which Conferences were Arranged for All Parents
by Teachers Who Presented Written Evaluation

Conferences for All Parents	Number of Programs (N=53)	Percentage
Yes	42	79.2
No	10	18.9
No Response	1	1.9
Totals	53	100.0

Table 31

Extent to Which Conferences were Arranged
Only as a Need Arose

Conferences Arranged as a Need Arose	Number of Programs (N=96)	Percentage
No	57	59.4
Yes	30	31.3
No Response	9	9.4
Totals	96	100.1 ^a

^aDue to a rounding error

Table 32

Number of Teachers Allowed Relief Time from Teaching Duties
to Conduct Conferences with Parents

Time Allowed	Number of Programs (N=70)	Percentage
Always	26	37.1
Never	23	32.9
Sometimes	20	28.6
No Response	1	1.4
Totals	70	100.0

The average length of one parent-teacher conference was reported by most teachers, 65.7% to be a quarter of an hour and in 38.8% of cases a longer period of time (see Table 33).

Table 33

Estimated Average Length of One Parent-Teacher Conference

Length of Conference	Number of Programs (N=70)	Percentage
$\frac{1}{4}$ Hour	46	65.7
$\frac{1}{2}$ Hour	18	25.7
Longer Than One Hour	4	5.7
1 Hour	1	1.4
No Response	1	1.4
Totals	70	99.9 ^a

^aDue to a rounding error

67.1% of teachers conducted conferences once or twice a year and next in order, a smaller number, 18.6%, conducted conferences three times a year (see Table 34). The largest percentage of teachers 37.1% conducted conferences twice a year.

Table 34
Frequency with Which Parent Teacher Conferences
were Arranged

Frequency	Number of Programs (N=70)	Percentage
Twice a Year	26	37.1
Once a Year	21	30.0
Three Times a Year	13	18.6
More Than Three Times a Year	5	7.1
Only as Requested by Parents	3	4.3
No Response	2	2.9
Totals	70	100.0

In community programs only 18.2% of teachers conducted conferences at the same time as other teachers, whereas in school board programs 62.5% of teachers did so (see Table 35). Of the total number of teachers conducting conferences 48.6% did so at the same time as other teachers.

Table 35
Number of Programs Which Conducted Parent-Teacher Conferences
at the Same Time as Others in the School

Same Time as Others in School	Number of Programs	Percentage	School Board (N=48)	Percentage	Community (N=22)	Percentage
Yes	34	48.6	30	62.5	4	18.2
No	24	34.3	15	31.3	9	40.9
Not Applicable	10	14.3	3	6.2	7	31.8
No Response	2	2.9	0	0.0	2	9.1
Totals	70	100.1 ^a	48	100.0	22	100.0

^aDue to a rounding error

Parents in 28.6% of the programs, teachers in 25.7% and principals in 22.9% featured most significantly in influencing the use of conferences as a means of reporting the child's progress to parents. Other teachers, ECS' coordinators, in-service training, ECS' consultants and university professors and/or courses ranked next in order, with a significant but lesser degree of influence (see Table 36).

Table 36

Most Significant Influence in Promoting the Use of Parent-Teacher Conferences as a Means of Reporting the Child's Progress

Influence	Number of Programs (N=70)	Percentage
Parents	20	28.6
ECS' Teacher	18	25.7
Principal	16	22.9
Other Teachers	12	17.1
ECS' Coordinator	9	12.9
In Service Training	9	12.9
ECS' Consultant	7	10.0
University Professors and/or Courses	7	10.0
Books and Periodicals	6	8.6
Convenience-School Bus did not Run	1	1.4
Special Day Set Aside for Conferences	1	1.4
Needs of Child	1	1.4
A.V. Presentation	--	--
No Response	3	4.3
Totals	110 ^a	157.2 ^a

^aHigh totals due to multiple responses

Only 21.4% of teachers reported two or more significant influences in encouraging the use of parent-teacher conferences as a means of reporting the child's progress (see Table 37). A wide range of single influences were reported to be influential, parents being the most influential single influence in 17.1% of programs.

Table 37

Extent to Which a Single Significant Influence was Reported to have Encouraged the Use of Parent-Teacher Conferences as a Means of Reporting the Child's Progress

Influences	Number of Programs (N=70)	Percentage
Parents	12	17.1
ECS' Teacher	8	11.4
Principal	6	8.6
ECS' Coordinator	6	8.6
Other Teachers	5	7.1
University Professors and/or Courses	3	4.3
In Service Training	3	4.3
ECS' Consultant	2	2.9
Books and Periodicals	1	1.4
Needs of Child	1	1.4
Convenience-School Bus did not Run	1	1.4
Special Day Set Aside for Conferences	1	1.4
A.V. Presentation	--	--
No Response	3	4.3
Totals	52	74.2

Almost all, 92.9% of teachers reported sharing two or more items with parents at parent-teacher conferences. Samples of childrens' work were most commonly shared by 88.6% of teachers. Also used extensively were checklists by 54.3%, anecdotal records by 47.1%, written evaluations by 41.4% and a child's file of work by 37.1% of teachers (see Table 38).

Table 38

Information Shared with Parents at Parent-Teacher Conferences

Type of Information	Number of Programs (N=70)	Percentage
Samples of Childrens' Work	62	88.6
Checklists	38	54.3
Anecdotal Records	33	47.1
Written Evaluations	29	41.4
Child's File of Work	26	37.1
Photographs of Program	13	18.6
Test Results	10	14.3
Slides of Program	3	4.3
Tape Recordings	2	2.9
Films of Program	1	1.4
Video Tape Presentations	1	1.4
No Response	3	4.3
Totals	221 ^a	315.7 ^a

^aHigh totals due to multiple responses

97.9% of the teachers were positive about the importance of reporting the progress of the child to the parents. The teacher who failed to respond to the question presented formal written evaluations and arranged conferences as a need arose. The teacher who considered reporting to be unimportant arranged conferences for parents as a need arose (see Table 39).

Table 39

Degree of Importance Ascribed by Teachers to Reporting the Progress of the Child to the Parents

Degree of Importance	Number of Programs (N=96)	Percentage
Extremely Important	63	65.6
Important	31	32.3
Unimportant	1	1.0
No Response	1	1.0
Totals	96	99.9 ^a

^aDue to a rounding error

Assessment. All the respondents to the question concerning the assessment of children used observation as a means of assessment. Informal testing, conferences with the child and memory were most widely practised. Informal tests 51.0% and conferences with the child 46.9% were sometimes used. Formal tests which were least used were reported by 45.8% of teachers never to have been used and by 25.0% to have been used sometimes (see Table 40). No one type of test featured prominently, though the Metropolitan Readiness and the Maturity Level for School Entrance and Readiness were used most frequently (see Table 41).

Table 40
Methods of Assessing Children and Frequency with Which They were Used

Method	Often	%	Sometimes	%	Never	%	No Response	%	Total	%
Observation	90	93.8	2	2.1	0	0.0	4	4.2	96	100.0
Memory	31	32.3	37	38.5	5	5.2	23	24.0	96	100.0
Conference with the Child	26	27.1	45	46.9	6	6.3	19	19.8	96	100.0
Informal Tests	24	25.0	49	51.0	7	7.3	16	16.7	96	100.0
Conferences with the Aide	19	19.8	19	19.8	18	18.8	40	41.7	96	100.0
Formal Tests	1	1.0	23	24.0	44	45.8	28	29.2	96	100.0

41.7% of teachers failed to respond to the possibility of having a conference with the aide. Additional methods of assessment which were all reported by 1.0% of teachers were video taped record of behaviour, grade book and information supplied by parents.

Table 41
Use of Formal Tests

Name of Test	Number of Programs (N=24)	Percentage
Metropolitan Readiness	4	16.7
Maturity Level For School Entrance and Readiness	4	16.7
Watson Reading Readiness	3	12.5
Denver Developmental Screening Test	2	8.3
Calgary Board of Education Readiness Test	1	4.2
Frostig	1	4.2
Cooperative Preschool Inventory	1	4.2
Grade 1 Readiness Tests	1	4.2
Gesell	1	4.2
Peabody Language	1	4.2
Frodick 1 PTA Stanford Binet	1	4.2
Irrelevant Response	2	8.3
No Response	2	8.3
Totals	24	100.2 ^a

^aDue to a rounding error

Record keeping. 83.3% of teachers maintained records of the development of children in the program (see Table 42). Checklists were most commonly used by 61.1% of teachers and anecdotal records rated second in importance, by 49.5% (see Table 43). 33.7% of teachers maintained two or more types of records (see Table 44). Checklists were reported to be in use alone by 36.3% of teachers and anecdotal records by 22.5%

Table 42

Records of the Development of the Children Maintained by Teachers

Records Maintained	Number of Programs (N=96)	Percentage
Yes	80	83.3
No	15	15.6
No Response	1	1.0
Totals	96	99.9 ^d

^dDue to a rounding error

Table 43

Types of Records Maintained by Teachers to Record
the Child's Development

Type of Record	Number of Programs (N=95)	Percentage
Checklists	58	61.1
Anecdotal Records	47	49.5
Samples of Childrens' Work with Comments	4	4.2
Tapes for Daily Reports	1	1.1
Past Reports Written Out for Parents	1	1.1
Records of Informal Tests in the Files	1	1.1
Improvement Each Month	1	1.1
Child's Drawing of Himself	1	1.1
No Response	1	1.1
Totals	115 ^a	121.4 ^a

^aHigh totals due to multiple responses

Table 44

Number of Teachers Reporting the Use of Only One Type of Record

Type of Record	Number of Programs (N=80)	Percentage
Checklists	29	36.3
Anecdotal Records	18	22.5
Samples of Childrens' Work with Comments	2	2.5
Improvement Each Month	1	1.3
Child's Drawing of Himself	1	1.3
No Response	1	1.3
Totals	52	65.2

Opportunities Provided for Parents to Understand More Fully the Development of Their Own Child and Others

Observing the child in the program. A majority, 62.5% of programs, invited parents to observe the child on special days. Definitions which were provided have been classified as, (a) family events: family days, Fathers' day/evening, Mothers' day, Christmas family party, (b) seasonal events/outings: year-end picnic, sledding trips, wiener roasts, rambles, Easter, field trips, (c) seasonal parties: Christmas family party, birthdays, Hallowe'en party, skating party, Valentine party, and (d) programs: music program, graduation, assemblies, Christmas program, education day open house. Second in order of importance were open days and 36.5% of teachers reported that parents were invited to see the child in the program at anytime (see Table 45). All programs invited parents on some occasions. The teacher who failed to respond to the question gave evidence elsewhere of having invited parents to attend. 39.6% of teachers invited parents on two or more occasions (see Table 46).

Only 11.5% of the programs made no provision for siblings to accompany parents on classroom visits. 86.4% did make provision, but only 38.5% always did. One teacher who never made provision mentioned an age limit with respect to childrens' attendance (see Table 47).

98.4% extended invitations to parents to observe the child in the regular program (see Table 48). Of the 4.2% who responded negatively, 2.1% had parent volunteers and 2.1% invited parents on special occasions. The teacher, who failed to respond, involved parent aides on a volunteer basis (see Table 48).

Table 45

Occasions on Which Parents were Invited to See the Child in the Program

Type of Event	Number of Programs (N=96)	Percentage
Special Days	60	62.5
Open Days	51	53.1
Anytime	35	36.5
Sports Days	19	19.8
Parents Assist in the Classroom and See Their Children	7	7.3
No Response	1	1.0
Totals	173	180.2

^aHigh totals due to multiple responses

Table 46

Extent to Which One Category Alone was Reported as the Time when
Parents were Invited to Attend the Program

Type of Event	Number of Programs (N=96)	Percentage
Special Days	23	24.0
Open Days	18	18.8
Anytime	9	9.4
Parents Assist in the Classroom and See Their Children	7	7.3
No Response	1	1.0
Totals	58	60.5

Table 47

Provision Made for Siblings to Accompany Parents on Program Visits

Frequency with Which Provision is Made	Number of Programs (N=96)	Percentage
Sometimes	46	47.9
Always	37	38.5
Never	11	11.5
No Response	2	2.1
Totals	96	100.0

Table 48

Extent to Which an Invitation was Extended to Parents to Observe the Child in the Regular Program

Invitation Extended	Number of Programs (N=96)	Percentage
Yes	91	94.8
No	4	4.2
No Response	1	1.0
Totals	96	100.0

Only 18.7% of programs had made provision for parents' observation of the child in the program, with the assistance of an observation guide (see Table 49).

94.8% of the teachers reported in positive terms concerning the importance of allowing parents to observe the child in the program (see Table 50). One teacher who failed to respond to the question on the importance of observation had not invited parents to observe. Two

of the teachers who deemed observation to be unimportant had invited parents to observe in the regular program and a third expressed the opinion that, "the child has a right to privacy in education."

Table 49

Number of Programs Which Provided Opportunities for Parents to Observe the Child in the Regular Program with the Assistance of an Observation Guide

Opportunities Provided	Number of Programs (N=96)	Percentage
No	75	78.1
Yes	18	18.8
No Response	3	3.1
Totals	96	100.0

Table 50

Degree of Importance Ascribed by Teachers to Parental Opportunities to Observe the Child in the Program

Degree of Importance	Number of Programs (N=96)	Percentage
Extremely Important	56	58.3
Important	35	36.5
Unimportant	4	4.2
No Response	1	1.0
Totals	96	100.0

Opportunities for understanding child development. 86.5% of programs provided opportunities for parents to learn more about child development (see Table 51). One teacher who failed to respond indicated that such opportunities "were planned but never implemented."

Table 51

Provision of Planned Opportunities for Parents to Learn More About Child Development

Opportunities Provided	Number of Programs (N=96)	Percentage
Yes	83	86.5
No	12	12.5
No Response	1	1.0
Totals	96	100.0

Lectures/talks by guest speakers, newsletters, workshops and large group discussions were the opportunities provided most extensively for parents to learn more about child development (see Table 52). In addition to the opportunities listed, many of which were elaborated upon, others were included: courses given by our coordinator, individual comments while parent is in as a volunteer aide, local lectures, workshops etc. on child development as they are available in the city, monthly meetings and ECS informational meetings. Of five subjects who failed to respond, four indicated alternative types of provision for parents to learn more about child development: visits in the home, lectures through Edmonton Early Childhood Services' program, discussion groups,

Table 52

Type of Opportunities and Extent to Which They have been Provided for Parents to Learn More About Child Development

Type of Opportunity	Number of Programs (N=83)						Totals	%
	Never	%	Once	%	More Than Once	%		
Accessible Library Materials	23	27.7	5	6.0	13	15.7	42	50.6
Lecture/Talks by Teachers	14	16.9	13	15.7	18	21.7	38	45.8
Audio Visual Presentations	12	14.5	25	30.1	17	20.5	29	34.9
Small Group Discussion	12	14.5	5	8.4	33	39.8	31	37.3
Newsletters	9	10.8	4	4.8	47	56.6	23	27.7
Workshops	8	9.6	22	26.5	25	30.1	28	33.7
Large Group Discussion	6	7.2	14	16.9	31	37.3	32	38.6
Lectures/Talks by Guest Speakers	1	1.2	13	15.7	52	62.7	17	20.5
							83	100.0

monthly meetings, parent education programs and formal classes held by the Department of Agriculture.

There was no consistency with respect to attendance at opportunities for parents to learn more about child development. 48.2% of teachers reported about half or most of parents to attend and 43.4% reported less than half to very few (see Table 53).

Parents played the most significant part in initiating such opportunities in 61.4% of programs. To a lesser degree, but next in order were Early Childhood Services' teachers in 48.2% of programs and Early Childhood Services' coordinators in 28.9% (see Table 54). 36.1% of teachers indicated two or more influences as being significant in initiating opportunities for parents to learn more about child development (see Table 55). In 22.9% of programs parents alone were significant and in 15.7% the teacher alone was significant.

Table 53

Estimated Average Attendance at Child Development Sessions

Number of Parents Attendance	Number of Programs (N=83)	Percentage
Less Than Half	24	28.9
Most	23	27.7
About Half	17	20.5
Very Few	12	14.5
All	1	1.2
No Response	6	7.2
Totals	83	100.0

Table 54

Most Significant Influence in Initiating Opportunities for Parents
to Learn More About Child Development

Influence	Number of Programs (N=83)	Percentage
Parents	51	61.4
ECS' Teacher	40	48.2
ECS' Coordinator	24	28.9
ECS' Consultant	8	9.6
Principal	7	8.4
ECS' Teachers in Area	2	2.4
Culture Youth and Recreation Workers in Nearby Area	1	1.2
Edmonton ECS' Program	1	1.2
Mental Health Association	1	1.2
School Counselor	1	1.2
No Response	1	1.2
Totals	137 ^a	164.9 ^a

^aHigh totals due to multiple responses

Table 55

Number of Programs Reporting a Single Influence in Initiating Opportunities for Parents to Learn More About Child Development

Influence	Number of Programs (N=83)	Percentage
Parents	19	22.9
ECS' Teacher	13	15.7
ECS' Coordinator	9	10.8
ECS' Consultant	3	3.6
Principal	2	2.4
ECS' Teachers in Area	1	1.2
Culture Youth and Recreation Workers in Nearby Area	1	1.2
Edmonton ECS' Program	1	1.2
Mental Health Association	1	1.2
School Counselor	1	1.2
No Response	1	1.2
Totals	52	62.6

Opportunities for Parents to Learn More About the Curriculum

Orientation procedures. 78.1% of the teachers reported a meeting for parents as a means of orientation. A letter to parents was reported by 62.5%, an announcement in the local paper by 56.3% and a visit to the center by the child and his parents by 51.0%. All were methods of orientation in use by over 50.0% of programs (see Table 56). Of the 6.3% of teachers who failed to respond to the question 1.0% indicated that the orientation procedure was carried out by parents. The majority, 77.0%

of teachers used two or more orientation procedures. Modes of orientation used alone were reported by only very small percentages of teachers (see Table 57).

Table 56

Orientation Procedures Which were Used Before the Child Entered the Program on a Regular Basis

Procedure Used	Number of Programs (N=96)	Percentage
Meeting for Parents	75	78.1
Letter to Parents	60	62.5
An Announcement in the Local Paper	54	56.3
A Visit to the Center by the Child and His Parents	49	51.0
A Visit to the Center by the Child	22	22.9
A Prospectus/Handbook About the Program	16	16.7
A Visit by the Teacher to the Child's Home	8	8.3
Phone Call to Parents	2	2.1
Parents Visited Neighbouring Kindergartens	2	2.1
An Announcement in the Parish Bulletin	1	1.0
No Response	6	6.3
Totals	295 ^a	307.3 ^a

^aHigh totals due to multiple responses

Table 57

Number of Programs Which Conducted a Single Orientation Procedure
Prior to the Child's Entry into the Program on a Regular Basis

Procedure Used	Number of Programs (N=96)	Percentage
A Meeting for Parents	6	6.3
Announcement in the Local Paper	4	4.2
A Letter to Parents	3	3.1
A Visit to the Center by the Child and His Parents	3	3.1
No Response	6	6.3
Totals	22	23.0

The Early Childhood Services' teacher had the most significant influence in determining the style of the orientation procedures in 58.9% of programs. Parents had 34.4% and principals 14.4% were next in order of importance, but to a lesser extent (see Table 58). Only 17.8% of teachers indicated two or more influences in determining the style of the orientation procedures (see Table 59). The Early Childhood Services' teacher was the sole influence in 42.2% of programs and parents alone were significant in 20.0%.

Table 58

Most Significant Influence in Determining the Style of the Orientation Procedures

Influence	Number of Programs (N=90)	Percentage
ECS' Teacher	53	58.9
Parents	31	34.4
Principal	13	14.4
ECS' Coordinator	6	6.7
Edmonton PSB	1	1.1
ECS	1	1.1
No Response	4	4.4
Totals	109 ^a	121.0 ^a

^aHigh totals due to multiple responses

Table 59

Number of Programs Which Reported a Single Significant Influence in Determining the Style of the Orientation Procedures

Influence	Number of Programs (N=90)	Percentage
ECS' Teacher	38	42.2
Parents	18	20.0
Principal	7	7.8
ECS' Coordinator	5	5.6
Edmonton PSB	1	1.1
ECS	1	1.1
No Response	4	4.4
Totals	74	82.2

Knowledge of the program. Parents meetings and newsletters were most commonly used as methods of acquainting parents with the program, by 88.5% and 65.6% of teachers respectively. Visits to the programs were listed sixth in order of importance and by only 11.5% of teachers (see Table 60).

Table 60

Methods Used to Acquaint Parents with the Program

Method Used	Number of Programs (N=96)	Percentage
Parents' Meeting	85	88.5
Newsletters	63	65.6
Local Newspaper Articles	24	25.0
Handbook	15	15.6
Parents' Bulletin Board	13	13.5
Visits to, or Involvement in the Program	11	11.5
Displays in the Community	9	9.6
Local Radio/Television Programs	6	6.3
Word of Mouth	2	2.1
Mailed Announcements	1	1.0
Open House	1	1.0
Informal Conversations With Parents when They Brought the Child to Kindergarten	1	1.0
Phone Discussions With Parents Prior to the Registration	1	1.0
No Response	6	6.3
Totals	238 ^a	247.8 ^a

^aHigh totals due to multiple responses

84.1% of the teachers who reported giving newsletters responded to the question asking the frequency with which newsletters were presented. 56.6% of the total number who responded presented newsletters monthly (see Table 61).

Table 61
Frequency with Which Newsletters Were Presented

Frequency	Number of Programs (N=63)	Percentage
Monthly	30	47.6
4 Times a Year	3	4.8
Every 2 Months	3	4.8
Twice a Month	3	4.8
Twice a Year	3	4.8
3 Times a Year	2	3.2
Weekly	2	3.2
6 During the Year	2	3.2
2-3 Times a Year	2	3.2
Every 2-3 Months	1	1.6
Many	1	1.6
Often	1	1.6
No Response	10	15.9
Totals	63	100.3 ^a

^aDue to a rounding error

72.0% of teachers reported using two or more methods for acquainting parents with the program. Only parents meetings featured significantly as a single method used for acquainting parents with the program in 20.8% of programs (see Table 62)

Table 62

Number of Programs Which Reported a Single Method of
Acquainting Parents with the Program

Method Used	Number of Programs (N=96)	Percentage
Parents Meetings	20	20.8
Newsletters	3	3.1
Local Newspaper Articles	1	1.0
Visit to the School	1	1.0
No Response	2	2.1
Totals	27	28.0

Early Childhood Services' coordinators 42.2% and parents 40.0% were the primary influences in determining the methods used to acquaint parents with the program (see Table 63). 46.7% of teachers reported two or more significant influences in determining the methods used to acquaint parents with the program. There was a range in the number of single influences recorded. Those which featured most commonly were parents, in 13.3% of programs and Early Childhood Services' coordinators, in 12.2% (see Table 64).

99.0% of teachers were positive about the importance of their informing parents about the program (see Table 65).

Table 63

Most Significant Influence in Determining the Methods Used to
Acquaint Parents with the Program

Influence	Number of Programs (N=90)	Percentage
ECS' Coordinator	38	42.2
Parents	36	40.0
In-service Training	22	24.4
ECS' Consultant	17	18.9
Other Teachers	15	16.7
Principal	11	12.2
University Professors and/or Courses	8	8.9
Teacher's Experience	6	6.7
Books and/or Periodical Articles	6	6.7
Audio Visual Presentations	1	1.1
Convenience	1	1.1
Aide	1	1.1
No Response	1	1.1
Totals	163 ^a	181.1 ^a

^aHigh totals due to multiple responses

Table 64

Programs Which Reported a Single Significant Influence in Determining
the Methods Used to Acquaint Parents with the Program

Influence	Number of Programs (N=90)	Percentage
Parents	12	13.3
ECS' Coordinator	11	12.2
In-service Training Workshops or Conventions	7	7.8
Other Teachers	4	4.4
ECS' Consultant	4	4.4
Principal	3	3.3
Teacher's Experience	2	2.2
University Professors and/or Courses	2	2.2
Books and/or Periodical Articles	1	1.1
Aide	1	1.1
No Response	1	1.1
Totals	48	53.1

Table 65

Degree of Importance Ascribed by Teachers to the Need for Their
Informing Parents About the Program

Degree of Importance	Number of Programs (N=96)	Percentage
Extremely Important	62	64.6
Important	33	34.4
Unimportant	--	--
No Response	1	1.0
Totals	96	100.0

With respect to the extent to which teachers perceived parents to be informed about the program the largest percentages reported were 34.4% who considered most parents to be well informed, 30.2% who considered some to be well informed and 30.2% who considered a few to be informed. 54.2%, the largest percent failed to respond concerning parents being uninformed, whereas 13.5% the smallest percent failed to respond to parents being well informed (see Table 66).

Active involvement. Assistance with field trips reported by 88.5% and parents' committees by 77.0% were the most commonly used methods of actively involving parents. 74.0% of programs reported the use of voluntary involvement whilst 18.0% reported compulsory parental involvement (see Table 67). One teacher reported of voluntary involvement "it doesn't work here." Parents involved in programs received any of a variety of titles: classroom supervisor, classroom assistant, classroom aide, aide, volunteer aide, mother aide, mother helper, parent helper or floating mother.

Table 66

Extent to Which Teachers Perceived Parents to be Informed About the Program

Number of Programs (N=96)										
Extent to Which Parents are Informed	Most	%	Some	%	A Few	%	No Response	%	Totals	%
Well Informed	33	34.4	28	29.2	19	19.8	13	13.5	93	96.9
Informed	28	29.2	29	30.2	8	8.3	28	29.2	93	96.9
Uninformed	2	2.1	10	10.4	29	30.2	52	54.2	93	96.9

As volunteers the extent to which parents were in the classroom varied. Reports were given of parents being involved: three days a week, Wednesday afternoons, six half days per year, once a month, twice a month, on a weekly basis, on a regular basis eg. every Thursday, on scheduled days according to a roster, as helpers on a day the regular mother helper is unable to attend, as requested by the teacher, for special activities and whenever they wish or can.

As volunteers parents were involved in a number of ways:

1. On a regular basis with children in classroom supervisory routines and activities, working with children in their activities or in lunch duty.
2. Periodically with children in driving on field trips, assisting with parties, picnics, skating, gym, library visits, music, painting, games, swim programs, kits, arts and crafts, bringing grandparents, sharing skills and talents in unique ways, yearly projects or visiting homes with guided tours.
3. In regular scheduled activities with no children directly involved, as film coordinator, members of a phoning committee, book convenor or parents' meetings.
4. Periodically with no children involved in fund raising events for special equipment, sewing bees to make paint shirts, costumes, bean bags etc., making equipment such as lock boards or bolt boards and flannel graph stories, providing equipment, sending supplies for creative art work, painting Early Childhood Services' furniture and baking or making cookies.

Table 67

Methods Used to Involve Parents Actively in the Program

Methods Used	Number of Programs (N=96)	Percentage
Assistance with Field Trips	85	88.5
Parents' Committee	74	77.1
Voluntary Involvement	71	74.0
Workshops to Make or Repair Equipment	41	42.7
Informal Gatherings	41	42.7
Car Pool	29	30.2
Compulsory Involvement	18	18.8
No Response	2	2.1
Totals	361 ^a	376.1 ^a

^aHigh totals due to multiple responses

89.6% of teachers reported using two or more methods of actively involving parents. Parents' committee 2.1%, voluntary involvement 5.2% and compulsory involvement were the only methods reported to be used alone.

Compulsory involvement was expected of individual parents in different degrees: one week at a time, twice a year/once a semester, twice a month, half a day per month, once a month, fifteen hours, at the teachers' request, if parent is free and of parents as a group at every session.

Activities included: supplying lunch or daily snacks for the children, janitorial duties, bus supervision, transportation arrangements

and attendance at seminars. A reason given for compulsory involvement was that, "parent involvement is compulsory for our grant." Two reasons for non-compulsory participation were given: "75% of mothers work so this is not workable in our area" and "I don't believe in this, it's got to come spontaneous."

57.3% of teachers considered most parents to be more supportive of the child's education as a result of being actively involved in the program. 15.6% considered parents to be the same and 14.6% considered a few parents to be less supportive. 8.3% of the teachers were undecided about the effects of the involvement (see Table 68). Only 5.2% of teachers failed to respond to the question about parents being more supportive, whereas 57.3% failed to respond to parents being the same and 70.8% to parents being less supportive.

The Use of the Center and the Climate of the Center for Parents

Use of the center. The primary use of the center was made by parents for parents meetings in 52.1% of programs. To a lesser degree it was used for Sunday School, polling, evening classes and public health services (see Table 69). In addition to the utilization of the center for alternative school purposes various community functions were named: cubs by 3.1%; baby-sitting during parent meetings, 4H meetings, playschool, Brownies, banquets by 2.1% and Scouts, Guides, Beavers, Boys' Brigade, showers, wedding receptions, rummage sales, church meetings, catechism classes, confirmation classes and changing room for visiting sports' teams by 1.0% of subjects.

Table 68
Extent to Which Teachers Perceived Parents to be Supportive of the Child's Education as a Result
of Their Active Involvement in the Program

Degree of Support	Number of Programs (N=96)					Totals	
	More	%	Some	%	A Few	%	%
More Supportive	55	57.3	21	21.9	7	7.3	88 91.7
The Same	10	10.4	15	15.6	8	8.3	88 91.7
Less Supportive	--	--	6	6.3	14	14.6	88 91.7

Table 69
Use of ECS' Room/Center by Parents/Community Out of Regular Program Hours

Use of Room	Number of Programs (N=96)						Totals	%
	Yes	%	No	%	No Response	%		
Parents' Meetings	50	52.1	30	31.3	16	16.7	96	100.0
Sunday School	14	14.6	47	49.0	35	36.5	96	100.0
Polling	11	11.5	47	49.0	38	39.6	96	100.0
Evening Classes	10	10.4	48	50.0	38	39.6	96	100.0
Public Health Services	8	8.3	40	52.1	38	39.6	96	100.0
Blood Donor Clinics	--	--	52	54.2	44	45.8	96	100.0

66.7% of programs were located in classrooms in schools including 13.5% of the community programs. 2.1% of school board programs were housed in unorthodox facilities (see Table 70).

Table 70
Locations of Programs

Location	Number of Programs (N=96)	Percentage
Classroom in School	64	66.7
Church Hall/Basement	12	12.5
Portable	4	4.2
Specially Designed ECS ¹ Center	4	4.2
Community Hall	3	3.1
Old One Roomed School House in School Grounds	1	1.0
Town Hall	1	1.0
Renovated Municipal Library Building	1	1.0
Adapted Room in School Basement	1	1.0
Large Storeroom in Back of Town Office	1	1.0
Teacherage	1	1.0
Abandoned Store	1	1.0
Staffroom Which is Divided in Two	1	1.0
Small Trailer or Shack	1	1.0
Totals	96	99.7 ^a

^aDue to a rounding error

Climate of the center. 47.9% of teachers reported that most parents seemed comfortable in the ECS' center, 25.0% reported that most were extremely comfortable and 28.1% that a few were uncomfortable. 52.1% failed to respond to parents feeling uncomfortable. These figures represent the majority of responses. 5.2% of teachers were undecided about parents' feelings towards the center (see Table 71).

Open invitations to the center either verbally in 83.3% of programs, by letter in 57.3%, or by phone in 31.3% were the most popular means of teachers' attempts to make parents feel welcome at the center (see Table 72). 76.0% of teachers used two or more methods to create an inviting climate. The only reported single means of attempting to create an inviting climate were verbal invitations by 14.6%, a welcoming letter by 3.1% and a phone call by 1.0%

The Accessibility of the Teacher and His/Her Relationship with Parents and Children Both In and Out of the Center

Accessibility of the teacher. A majority, 63.5% of teachers had invited parents to phone the center (see Table 73). Of 33.3% who had not invited parents to phone an explanation was given by 68.8%: no phone by 34.4%, "parents invited to call at home", "parents assume they can phone", "told a few but not officially" by 9.4%, "no reason to call", "I see parents each week when they bring their child" by 3.1%. 64.6% of teachers sometimes received phone calls at the center from parents, 16.7% often did whilst 16.7% never did so (see Table 74). Of the 16.7% who never received phone calls 68.8% reported either having no phone or limited access to the phone.

Table 72

Ways in Which Teachers Attempted to Create an Inviting Climate
for Parents

Methods	Number of Programs (N=96)	Percentage
Verbal Invitation to Parents to Visit Anytime	80	83.3
Welcoming Letter Extending an Open Invitation	55	57.3
Phone Call Extending an Open Invitation	30	31.3
Pleasant Reception and Waiting Facilities	19	19.8
Parents' Library	12	12.5
Written Appreciation of Parental Involvement in the Form of a Certificate, Letter From the Children, Article in the Newsletter or Newspaper, Letter from the Board	11	11.5
Welcoming Sign	9	9.4
Bulletin Board	8	8.3
Parents' Corner/Room	7	7.3
Verbal Appreciation of Involvement	4	4.2
Verbal Welcome	3	3.1
Suggestion Box	2	2.1
Full Coffee Pot	2	2.1
Party of Appreciation	1	1.0
Irrelevant Response	1	1.0
No Response	3	3.1
Totals	247 ^a	257.3 ^a

^aHigh totals due to multiple responses

Table 73

Number of Programs Which Officially Informed Parents That They May
Phone the Center

Parents Invited to Phone	Number of Programs (N=96)	Percentage
Yes	61	63.5
No	32	33.3
No Response	3	3.1
Totals	96	99.9 ^a

^aDue to a rounding error

Table 74

Frequency with Which Teachers Received Phone Calls at the Center
From Parents

Frequency	Number of Programs (N=96)	Percentage
Sometimes	62	64.6
Often	16	16.7
Never	16	16.7
No Response	2	2.1
Totals	96	100.1 ^a

^aDue to a rounding error

Parents' meetings, or occasions before or after school were the most common times for teachers to often talk informally to parents. 49.0% of teachers sometimes talked to parents at local stores and 45.8% sometimes had opportunities during invitations to childrens' homes. 25.0% of teachers reported never having the opportunity to talk to parents at local community functions. These figures indicate the largest percentage of responses in each category (see Table 75). 4.2% of teachers failed to indicate on which, if any occasions they talked informally to parents. Additional occasions reported were telephone conversations and in-school assistance.

27.0% of the teachers lived six miles or more away from the center and 25.0% lived only a few blocks away (see Table 76). The teachers who lived more than ten miles away reported never having opportunities to talk to parents at local community functions.

90.7% of teachers received phone calls at home from parents but only 30.2% received them from children. Of the 24.0% who often received phone calls from parents 9.4% were school board and 14.6% were community operated programs (see Table 77).

57.3% of teachers reported never having received visits at home from both parents and children. 41.7% received visits from parents and 41.6% from children (see Table 78), but only 6.3% often received them from parents and 8.3% often from children.

Table 75
Opportunities for Teachers to Talk Informally to Parents

Number of Programs
(N=96)

Occasion	Often	%	Some Times	%	Never	%	No Response	%	Totals	%
At Parents' Meetings	55	57.3	32	33.3	--	--	9	9.4	96	100.0
Before or After School	54	56.3	34	35.4	--	--	8	8.3	96	100.0
At Local Community Functions	22	22.9	22	22.9	24	25.0	28	29.2	96	100.0
At Local Stores	18	18.7	47	49.0	13	13.5	18	18.7	96	99.9 ^a
Invitations to Childrens' Homes	6	6.3	44	45.8	20	20.8	26	27.1	96	100.0

^aDue to a rounding error

Table 76

Distance Which Teachers Lived From the ECS' Center

Distance	Number of Programs (N=96)	Percentage
Two to Five Miles	33	34.4
A Few Blocks	24	25.0
Six to Ten Miles	13	13.5
More Than Ten Miles	13	13.5
One Mile	12	12.5
No Response	1	1.0
Totals	96	99.9 ^a

^aDue to a rounding error

Table 77

Frequency with Which Teachers Received Phone Calls at Home From Parents and Children

Frequency	Number of Programs (N=96)			
	From Parents	%	From Children	%
Sometimes	64	66.7	27	28.1
Often	23	24.0	2	2.1
Never	8	8.3	65	67.7
No Response	1	1.0	2	2.1
Totals	96	100.0	96	100.0

Table 78

Frequency with Which Teachers Received Visits at Home From Parents and Children

Frequency	Number of Programs (N=96)			
	From Parents	%	From Children	%
Never	55	57.3	55	57.3
Sometimes	34	35.4	32	33.3
Often	6	6.3	8	8.3
No Response	1	1.0	1	1.0
Totals	96	100.0	96	99.9 ^a

^aDue to a rounding error

Relationship of the teacher. Sending cards or letters was the method used most frequently by teachers to contact children out of school hours (see Table 79). 2.1% of the teachers failed to respond to this question. Other occasions on which teachers reported to have contacted children were: community functions, shopping, skating and Sunday school by 12.5%; visiting on a social basis, parents are personal friends, children visit to play with teacher's children, make cards and visit sick children in hospital by 3.1% and LAC meetings in childrens' homes by 1.0%.

76.0% of the teachers were of the opinion that it was reasonable for them to be accessible to parents/children out of school hours (see Table 80). 12.4% of those who answered positively qualified their responses by the following statements: "to a certain extent", "in rare occasions when a problem arises", "in emergencies", "within reasonable limits eg. school/community functions held in the evening", "phone calls, but this

Table 79
Ways in Which Teachers Make Contact with Children Out of School Hours
Number of Programs
(N=96)

Contact	Some Times	%	Never	%	Often	%	No Response	%	Totals	%
Sending Cards or Letters	47	49.0	33	34.4	3	3.1	13	13.5	96	100.0
Phoning Children Who are Sick	36	37.5	26	27.1	11	11.5	23	24.0	96	100.1 ^a
Visiting Children Who are Sick	31	32.3	31	32.3	4	4.2	30	31.3	96	100.1 ^a

^aDue to a rounding error

should only happen in special circumstances", "I don't mind it, but I don't encourage it", "to an extent, especially for parents", "I would not want my whole life to be centered totally around my school life".

Table 80

Teachers Opinions About Whether it was Reasonable for Them to be Accessible to Parents/Children Out of School Hours

It is Reasonable for Teachers to be Accessible	Number of Programs (N=96)	Percentage
Yes	73	76.0
Undecided	14	14.6
No	7	7.3
No Response	2	2.1
Totals	96	100.0

Informal notes were the indirect means used most commonly for contacting parents and the Health Unit nurse was the person most frequently used as a mediator (see Table 81). 5.2% of teachers failed to respond in any way to the question. Other reported means of communicating indirectly with parents were: phone by 9.4%; speech therapist and aide by 2.1% and newsletter, verbal message via children and coordinator by 1.0%. 3.1% of teachers indicated that they preferred to make personal contact themselves with parents.

41.7% of teachers preferred a personal relationship with parents, whilst only 17.7% specified preference for a professional one (see Table 82). 36.2% of teachers provided an alternative response to the

Table 81
Extent to Which Teachers Communicated Indirectly with Parents Through Another Means

Means of Communication	Number of Programs (N=96)						Totals	%
	Some Times	%	Never	%	Often	%		
Health Unit Nurse	57	59.4	10	10.4	5	5.2	96	100.0
Informal Note	46	47.9	1	1.0	34	35.4	96	99.9 ^a
Another Parent	40	41.7	18	18.8	5	5.2	96	100.1 ^a
Principal	33	34.4	21	21.9	5	5.2	96	100.0
School Secretary	32	33.3	22	22.9	6	6.3	96	100.0
Social Worker	26	27.1	26	27.1	1	1.0	96	100.0
Psychologist	26	27.1	26	27.1	2	2.1	96	100.1 ^a
Interpreter	7	7.3	40	41.7	0	0.0	96	100.0

^aDue to a rounding error

questions. Several responses were explained: "professional--too harsh", "personal to the extent that the family interests and concerns are those they wish to share with me", "I am interested in knowing the whole family as a unit", "I like to develop a friendship", "I would like to develop their trust and confidence in me as a teacher of their child", "Due to parental involvement I feel one does develop a somewhat personal relationship, secondary to the professional one".

Table 82

Type of Relationships Which Teachers Preferred
to Establish with Parents

Type of Relationship	Number of Programs (N=96)	Percentage
Personal	40	41.7
Combination Personal/ Professional	26	27.9
Professional	17	17.7
Friendly	3	3.1
Informal Friendly	2	2.1
Friendly Professional	2	2.1
Cooperative Working Relationship	1	1.0
No Response	5	5.2
Totals	96	100.8 ^a

^aDue to a rounding error

The Use of Instructional Materials or Visits in the Home Setting

The use of instructional materials. Only 24.0% of teachers provided materials for use in the home (see Table 83).

Table 83

Extent to Which Instructional Materials were Provided for All
Children on a Regular Basis for Use in the Home

Instructional Materials Provided	Number of Programs (N=96)	Percentage
No	73	76.0
Yes	23	24.0
Totals	96	100.0

In a majority of cases 69.6%, materials were delivered by the child. Second in order of importance 17.4% of teachers presented materials to children in their homes (see Table 84). Only 17.4% of teachers used two or more methods of delivering materials. In 52.2% of situations delivery of materials by the child was the single mode of delivery used (see Table 85).

There appeared to be no one preferred time for presenting materials, a range is indicated (see Table 86).

Ideas for parents to use with children were the most common types of materials, being used by 65.2% of the teachers who presented materials for use in the home. Games and worksheets were of secondary and equal importance (see Table 87).

Table 84

Ways in Which Materials were Presented for Use in the Home

Method Used	Number of Programs (N=23)	Percentage
Delivered by Child	16	69.6
Presented by Teacher to Individual Children in Their Homes	4	17.4
Mailed to Home	2	8.7
Presented by Teacher to a Group of Children in a Home	2	8.7
Parents Collect Materials	2	8.7
Presented by Coordinator During Winter	1	4.3
No Response	1	4.3
Totals	28 ^a	121.7 ^a

^aHigh totals due to multiple responses

Table 85

Number of Programs Using a Single Method of
Presentation of Materials

Method Used	Number of Programs (N=23)	Percentage
Delivered by Child	12	52.2
Mailed to Home	2	8.7
Picked up by Parents	2	8.7
Presented by Teacher to Individual Children in Their Homes	1	4.3
Presented by Teacher to a Group of Children in Their Homes	1	4.3
No Response	1	4.3
Totals	19	82.5

Table 86

Frequency with Which Instructional Materials were Presented for Use
in the Home

Frequency of Presentation	Number of Programs (N=23)	Percentage
Once a Month	5	21.7
Once a Week	5	21.7
As Teacher Feels it Necessary	5	21.7
When Requested by Parents or Child	4	17.4
For Absentees when Requested by Parents	2	8.7
Once Every Two Weeks	2	8.7
Every Day	1	4.3
During Long Winter Break Between Two Forty Day Periods	1	4.3
No Response	1	4.3
Totals	26 ^a	122.8 ^a

^aHigh totals due to multiple responses

Table 87

Types of Materials Presented for Use in the Home

Type of Materials	Number of Programs (N=23)	Percentage
Ideas for Parents to Use with Children	15	65.2
Childrens' Games or Activities for Use in the Teacher's Absence	9	39.2
Work Sheets	9	39.2
Supplies and Equipment: Crayons, Paper, Scissors, Plasticine	3	13.0
Library Books	2	8.7
Extension of Class Activities (Sheets with Alphabet Letter, Find a Picture)	2	8.7
Kits	1	4.3
Pets	1	4.3
Totals	47 ^a	204.1 ^a

^aHigh totals due to multiple responses

The ECS' teacher was the most significant influence for encouraging the use of instructional materials in the home in 43.5% of situations where materials were provided. The ECS' consultant was of secondary importance (see Table 88).

Table 88

Most Significant Influence for Encouraging the Provision of
Instructional Materials for Use in the Home

Influence	Number of Programs (N=23)	Percentage
ECS' Teacher	10	43.5
ECS' Consultant	6	26.1
ECS' Coordinator	5	21.7
Parents	5	21.7
Former Teacher	1	4.3
Six Week Course	1	4.3
No Place to Hold Kindergarten at Beginning of Term	1	4.3
Grade 1 Teacher Since ECS' Program was Discontinued	1	4.3
No Response	2	8.7
Totals	32 ^a	148.9 ^a

^aHigh totals due to multiple responses

Home visits. Only 21.7% of teachers using instructional materials reported the use of home visits as shown in Table 89.

Table 89

Use of Regular Home Visits as Part of the Program To Present Instruction/Instructional Material

Use of Home Visits	Number of Programs (N=23)	Percentage
No	18	78.3
Yes	5	21.7
Totals	23	100.0

In 80.0% of situations where home visits were made the teacher had been the most significant influence in selecting the method (see Table 90).

Table 90

Most Significant Influence in Promoting the Use of Home Visits

Influence	Number of Programs (N=5)	Percentage
Teacher	4	80.0
Parents	1	20.0
ECS' Consultant	1	20.0
Principal	1	20.0
Totals	7 ^a	140.0 ^a

^aHigh totals due to multiple responses

In 80.0% of programs home visits had commenced since 1973 (see Table 91).

Table 91

Year in Which Home Visits Commenced as Part
of the Regular Program

Year	Number of Programs (N=5)	Percentage
1974	2	40.0
1975	1	20.0
1973	1	20.0
Home Visits were Always Part of the Program	1	20.0
Totals	5	100.0

In every case where home visits were made the teacher had always talked to the mother, but only in 20.0% of situations had always talked to the father. Opportunities also occurred for teachers to talk to children and siblings in 40.0% of the homes and grandparents in 20.0% (see Table 92).

Table 92
Opportunities for Teachers to Talk to Family Members During Home Visits

Persons Talked to	Number of Programs (N=5)						
	Always	%	Sometimes	%	Never	%	Totals
Mother	5	100.0	--	--	--	--	5 100.0
Father	1	20.0	4	80.0	--	--	5 100.0

Interview Data

All teachers were available for interview on the dates scheduled by the researcher to visit the community, but seven parents randomly selected for interview purposes were unavailable, either because of other commitments or absence from the community. Interviews were conducted with those parents available. No attempt was made to schedule an alternative time for persons who were unavailable rather, substitutes were interviewed or fewer interviews conducted.

In zone one there was an additional parent when a husband joined his wife. In zone two a third parent was substituted for the chairman who was out of town. In zones three, four, five and six, seven parents were unavailable, two in each of the first three zones and one in the last. A total number of twenty-five persons participated in twenty-one separate interviews for which data has been recorded (see Table 93).

Table 93

Number of Persons Interviewed About Parent-Teacher Communication

Zone	Teacher	LAC Chairman	Parents	Total
1	1	1	4 ^a	6
2	1	--	3 ^a	4
3	1	1 ^a	1	3
4	1	1	2	4
5	1	1	1	3
6	1	1	3 ^a	5
Totals	6	5	13	25

^aOn each occasion one interview was conducted with two parents present at one session

In each of Tables 94 to 110 data for each program is recorded in the following order, (a) teacher, (b) LAC Chairman, and (c) parents.

Question 1

A total of fifty statments concerning communication between parents and teachers in six programs during the 1974-1975 school year have been classified into eight common types as shown in Table 94.

Thirteen responses from six programs indicated that although many fathers had been involved on special occasions, were supportive if help was needed, were friendly, approachable, concerned, interested, informed or appreciative, communication had been primarily between mothers and teachers. It was stated that a social attitude prevails against fathers' participation: "It's a mother's world." "Fathers have always left things like education up to the mothers." "I think it's a social thing and fathers feel it's not their responsibility, which is the wrong thing maybe but this is how people think." For some fathers it was just not convenient: "Most men are working during the day."

Ten persons from five programs revealed positive attitudes towards their communication, by statements such as: "real good", "really great", "fantastic", "very good", "effective", "communicate well" and "kept well informed".

A similar number discussed the fact that communication had ranged from minimal to extensive. One teacher had "lots of communication with about half and with some of them very little." Similarly another stated that there were almost fifty percent that she'd "gotten to know well enough to feel comfortable with" and some probably

Table 94

Communication Between Parents and Teachers During the 1974-1975 School Year

Zone

	Zone										Total
	1		2		3		4		5		6
Mainly with Mothers	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Positive Attitudes Expressed	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	13
Range in Extent of Contact from Minimal to Extensive	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	10
Informal	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	10
Primarily Person to Person Contact	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	6
Open Door Policy Developing and Recognised	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	5
Teacher's Responsibility to Initiate Contact	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	3
Need to Differentiate Between Communication and Board Room Talk	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	2
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1

three out of twenty that she "hadn't met." Some parents "dropped off children every day and stopped in to talk and see what was happening."

"Informal" was the way in which six respondents from five different programs described their communication.

Five respondents representing different programs indicated that a majority of communication had been "person to person contact", on the phone, in the classroom or in homes.

In three different programs parents and a teacher described an open door policy which was developing and was recognised by parents: "We called them in last year, I had to always call. This year I don't have to call, they just come."

Two teachers expressed the opinion that it is a teachers' responsibility to initiate contact in view of a hierarchial structure which exists and that they had made every effort to "break the ice" initially: "The minute you tried to make friends they were ready, but they weren't going to make the first move."

One parent, an LAC chairman felt there was a difference between communication and "the board room talk", which he had mainly been engaged in.

Question 2

Seven different types of comments were determined from twenty-two statements related to the relationships established between parents and teachers (see Table 95).

Six respondents from four programs had had association with the parent or teacher prior to being involved in the ECS' program: "I've known her for quite some time." "We're neighbours."

In three programs where a good relationship had been established, initial discomfort stemming from their own insecurity in the presence of the other, is reported to have been experienced by both teachers and parents: "We walked in there the first day and we didn't know (the teacher) was going to be our teacher...She looked so young and so scared. I was scared too because really, I have a son in grade six and this is the first school that I have ever been tempted even been allowed to be involved in and I was scared to walk back into a classroom again. I went back a few years and remembered myself going to school." "I know that (the teacher) was very sensitive to parents' comments when we first started out. She was very unsure of herself." "I know that at first we made her very nervous. I know that in the beginning she felt very uncomfortable when we were in there."

Three persons from two programs commented with apprehensiveness, on the authority which parents appeared to have over the teacher and the extent of the advice which was given to the teacher. One parent did not like "the idea of telling the teacher what to do...Many parents have too much say in the kindergarten...You wouldn't go to the school and tell the teacher what to do...the kindergarten teacher, she's a qualified teacher and yet I find we do that." A second parent suggested that the board (LAC) was perhaps too open and honest: "A fragile situation arose...it seemed we were trampling on her (teacher)."

From the comments of parents and a teacher it appeared that a range existed in the types of relationship established between the teacher and parents, the teacher being really close to some and much less familiar with others: "It's either been friendly or sort of on

a neutral basis where I know them to say 'Hi' to them." "It was more like we were all friends." "It was more of a friend to friend relationship than a parent to teacher. It was tremendous." In contrast one parent stated: "I personally haven't had too much involvement with the teacher."

Parents from two programs indicated that they were more familiar with the ECS' teacher than with other teachers in the elementary school whom they had met only at formal meetings: "I think I've probably got to know the preschool teacher more than the grade school teacher...I have a better feeling about her than I do about the grade school teacher." "The meetings aren't quite as formal as I used to find with the grade one teacher...at a parent-teacher day or something you just meet them (grade one teachers) and this is it. You're told what your child's work is about. That's all I ever had."

Two LAC chairmen because of their experience as board members were more aware of teachers' difficulties, were sensitive to their feelings and were supportive of them.

One teacher observed that parents at group meetings seemed "shy to give feedback" and were "not very open".

Question 3

Fifteen varied factors were revealed by sixty-one comments based on positive experiences, which were considered to affect the type of relationship established between parents and teachers (see Table 96).

Nine persons in six different programs expressed the opinion that the teacher was a key factor in any type of relationship and commented

Table 96

Factors Affecting the Type of Relationship Established Between Parents and Teachers

Zone

	Zone										Total
	1		2		3	4		5		6	
The Teacher	*				*	*	*	*	*	*	9
Open Door Policy	*		*	*	*	*	*				7
Increased Parental Involvement	*	*	*			*	*	*	*		6
Time Spent Together		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		6
Teacher's Interest in Children	*		*	*	*					*	5
Compatibility			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	5
Teacher's Respect for Parents			*	*	*	*					5
Parents' Attitude			*	*	*	*		*	*		5
Teacher's Willingness to be Friendly			*	*	*						3
Principal's Attitude			*	*	*						3
Use of First Names			*	*	*						2
Small Community								*	*		2
Parents' Appreciation of Teacher					*						1
A Need for Two-Way Communication						*					1
Age of Teacher					*						1

on personality, friendliness, manner, honesty, openness and ability to communicate: "The teacher...her easy manner. In a way she's an easy person to communicate with...We can have some real good, knock 'em down, drag 'em out arguments, but there's never any hard feelings left." "The teacher...she was always very open." "She's a really interesting person. I like the ideas she has. She will tell you what she thinks ...she doesn't leave you on a limb wondering what's going on." "Her personality...her friendliness and the openness."

Seven persons in four programs made reference to an open door policy and a changed attitude which existed. The ECS' center was open and parents could, and did come to the class to watch, to chat, or offer assistance. Parents felt welcome: "The door was always open...you were never made to feel unwelcome."

Six persons from four programs considered the increased parental involvement in lieu of formal meetings, to be a factor. It was stated that parents who are there as participants on a day to day, or frequent basis, feel less threatened than when they visit merely to attend a formal meeting.

Six persons in five programs reported that time spent together other than that in business hours or associated with the program, was important. Social visits, common interests and activities were suggested: "Time spent together not just in business hours but having an evening with the teacher...being in contact some way." You have to have some sort of ground for friendship other than just the parent-teacher relationship." "I invite them home and they come over and visit and I go out and visit them." Association through a professional development

course had established a contact: "We were doing a course together and we had some discussions."

Five persons from four different programs noted that the teacher was interested in the children and this they considered to be the basis for, or relevant to a relationship: "She communicates really well with parents because she's so interested in the children. 'I think it comes across, we know it.'" "Interest in the child. If (teachers) are vitally interested in the child that's the basis for a relationship." "Her interest in getting your child."

Compatibility was a key factor according to five persons from five programs: "You have to be basically compatible." "I suppose it depends somehow how well you hit it off with the person." One teacher stated that she and several parents "feel happy together and enjoy each others' company."

Two teachers and three parents in two different programs considered the teachers' recognition and acceptance of parents' capabilities, interests and feelings to be important: "She asked us for suggestions and if there was anything we'd like to do." "I think trust." "Parents are capable of doing things, have to feel needed and be given a chance."

Four teachers and a parent from three different programs discussed parents' willingness to be involved, or friendly: "If you try and push people they just resent it so much that you loose ground before you ever gain anything."

Teachers' willingness to be friendly was mentioned by three persons: "You have to be friendly."

Principals' attitudes could affect parent-teacher relationships. Their being receptive to parent involvement and supportive of the teacher were significant in the opinions of two teachers and a parent: "He's a real community school person. He was very eager, in fact he was the one who pushed me to have parents come in because at first, it was my first year of teaching and I was terrified. I didn't want people in seeing what I was doing until I knew what I was doing myself. He's the one who kept on encouraging me to do it and I'm glad I did now."

Two parents commented favourably on the practice of using first names: "I grew up in Scotland and you never did things like that... but she calls us by our first name."

A small community where people know each other and are involved in the same events could affect the type of relationship, according to the opinions of a parent and a teacher from one program.

One teacher expressed the fact that teachers need to feel appreciated and parents express appreciation openly: "When, before the program one of the mothers comes up and pins on a nice big corsage, then you say yes you're appreciated."

A need for two way communication was discussed by one parent "otherwise you don't get to first base, I mean it's just another regimental thing if you don't."

A parent considered the age of the teacher to be a significant factor, younger teachers being friendlier.

Question 4

1. Eleven outcomes of communication for parents were expressed in forty-six comments, nine being positive outcomes and two negative as

shown in Table 97.

Two teachers and eight parents from six programs discussed parents' increased knowledge, interest in and understanding of the program: "You know what the program is all about...the parents who have had good communication understand the program." "I have a better understanding of what goes on in kindergarten." "They realize what's going on and it's an eye opener to them to know what's going on. Unless you go there and sort of see what they're doing you sort of think, I thought, oh well you send them there, they're playing with toys and this and that, things that they could be doing right in their own home. This was my feeling of it to begin with." "You're more interested in what they're doing, I mean you're always interested but in the kindergarten my daughter was in there wasn't the opportunity to find out these things." Government and educational organization was more fully understood: "We all know more about Government than we did before and our county set up...about the whole educational process."

Six parents in five programs discussed the formation of friendships and the enjoyment of relationships with other parents or the teacher: "It was good for all of us, we got to know each other." "I've just enjoyed the relationship with (the teacher), just meeting her and getting to know her better."

Five persons from four different programs commented upon the feeling of ease and comfort in not being alienated immediately, by the child's separation to an educational institution which was a separate entity: "I think it's nice that you don't have to send the child off and wonder what they are doing. You are conscious of what they are

Table 97

Outcomes of Communication for Parents

Zone

	Zone												Total					
	1			2			3			4			5			6		
Greater Knowledge, Interest in and Understanding of the Program				*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	10	
Establishment of New Friendships				*			*				*	*	*	*	*	*	6	
Parents not Alienated from Child at School Entry					*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	5	
Satisfaction of Being Involved in a Working Partnership with Teacher					*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	5	
Mutual Cooperation in Handling Child's Problems	*	*	*	*					*					*	*	*	5	
Personal Enjoyment and Accomplishment					*					*	*	*	*	*	*	*	4	
Increased Understanding of the Child								*			*	*	*	*	*	*	3	
Opportunity for Parents to Voice Opinions Openly and Attempt to Resolve Situations													*	*	*	*	3	
Resentment of Time Spent by Parents in Administration											*			*	*	*	2	
LAC Chairman's Responsibilities Overwhelming													*	*	*	*	2	
Familiarity with and Ease in School Environment				*													1	

doing, where they are going that day and I think this is a good thing." "Previously all of a sudden the kid was cut off from the mother and the home, which I don't think is right. It's nicer to still buddy along with them."

Five parents from four programs expressed their satisfaction in being involved in a working partnership in which they were involved with the child's education and integrated into the system: "It's not home in one place and school in another and the twain shall never meet--they (parents) feel more integrated into the system." "I enjoyed seeing him grow and learn in the classroom." "I really feel a part of the kindergarten."

Four parents and a teacher appreciated the mutual assistance and cooperation in gaining awareness or understanding of, or correcting problems which children may have had: "There have been positive results for us in that we thought there was a certain problem, but we later discovered that it was her social adjustment...By talking, we realized it was just a matter of adjustment." "I didn't realize she was so shy ...I've always told her to sit down and be quiet and not make so much noise. Many things like that I've found out because I see (the teacher) so much and we're able to talk on the phone."

Four parents described their own personal feelings of enjoyment and satisfaction: "I know for myself, I thoroughly enjoyed it...The winter time went so quickly." "I've had some that hated to drop out when their kids have gone." This was accompanied by a sense of accomplishment: "I enjoyed being in on the ground floor...we're really pleased with our organization because we are such a strong group now."

Two teachers and one parent observed that the parent gained greater understanding of the child and his development in the classroom and in relation to other children: "I think lots of them (parents) see more of the needs of the kids." "It's certainly made me understand (my daughter) far better than I ever did before, knowing how she acts in kindergarten, hearing (the teacher's) comments about things she does, have made it a lot easier for both (my daughter) and I."

One teacher and two parents considered it beneficial for parents to have the opportunity to express opinions openly and endeavour to resolve problems as a result of improved knowledge of alternative recourses: "Parents feel better if they get a problem off their chest even if they can't totally resolve the situation."

A teacher and a parent from a different program expressed resentment at the amount of time spent by parents, not in the classroom with the children, but on administrative duties.

An LAC chairman was disturbed at the extent of parental responsibility: "I've been president of certain organizations but not with the same sort of professional side to them; not when you've had a big budget and people who were dependent upon you." Another found this same responsibility interesting: "It's been interesting this business of having a teacher who's really employed by us. It's sort of given us a different idea, what it's like also for the teachers at school. It's a miniature school that we have here."

One parent liked the opportunity to become familiar with and at ease in the school environment enabling a parent to overcome the alienation or non attendance which normally results from later parent-

teacher interviews: "I think it helps you get used to going and you feel more free to go."

2. Seven categories of comments were formulated from twenty-five statements about the outcomes of communication for teachers, only one being negative (see Table 98).

Three teachers and five parents from five programs commented on gains in the form of eased pressure and workload for the teacher, in having and knowing that she has the support and assistance of parents: "I think the parents make a program for me, because without their help what can you do?" "I think it probably makes her job easier...It's much easier to do things if parents are in." "She knew that we were there if she needed us and she would phone up sometimes and say, 'Help I'm stuck, I have to have someone in, can you come?', and I would go." One parent pointed out that the formation of a strong organization recognized and respected in the community had given the program status, thereby making the teacher's task simpler.

Two teachers and two parents in three programs discussed the teacher's feeling of accomplishment and confidence in her own endeavours because of parental support, encouragement and expressed appreciation: "Oh just a feeling of accomplishment. The parents really always make me feel good, they keep on telling me how pleased they are... If I wouldn't have had such good communication with a lot of them, I probably would have felt sort of down, sort of like, gee have I really accomplished that much. But when parents come in and say, 'Gee whiz, I see this difference and this difference in my child', and they're really pleased with what's going on, it just gives you the encouragement that you need to stay at it and to keep on trying to communicate with parents."

Table 98
Outcomes of Communication for the Teacher

Zone

	Zone												Total	
	1			2		3		4		5		6		
Pressure of Workload Eased for Teacher						*	*	*		*		*		8
Parental Support and Encouragement for Teacher							*	*		*			*	4
Teacher's Understanding of Child is Improved						*		*						3
Parents as a Source of Ideas, Stimulation and Motivation									*	*			*	3
Friendships Established with Parents									*	*			*	3
Greater Understanding Between Parent and Teacher of Roles and Responsibilities						*				*		*		3
Problems with Children Resulting from Parent-Teacher Relationship									*					1

"I think that the teacher would feel a lot more satisfied in her mind that they felt she was doing a good job...This way (the teachers) should know that parents have confidence in them."

Two parents and one teacher from three programs indicated how the teachers' understanding of the child, his idiosyncracies and problems is improved: "I think no doubt it would help her understand why some child is shy and backward. It might bring things out this way."

One teacher and two parents from three programs noted that the teacher is no longer the sole source of ideas or evaluator of the program. Parents are able to offer suggestions, stimulate, motivate, even give drive to a teacher: "She isn't king of all as far as ideas go...she's got a lot from some of the parents in suggestions for doing this and that...I think this helps the teacher." "We talk about excursions and that and from what parents have said I know that I won't be using some things again next year."

Two parents and a teacher from different programs commented on the formation of close friendships: "We've very much enjoyed each other." "I did form some really close friendships with some of them." This was also seen as having drawbacks: "That can be hard in a way because whether you like it or not you tend to be more concerned about their children."

Parents and teachers both have a deeper understanding of each others' roles and responsibilities: "They understand what you're doing and you understand about them and what they're interested in." This understanding was also considered to aid the two in working towards common goals.

One negative outcome was outlined by a teacher who remarked about

a child's change in behaviour as a result of the parent being present in the classroom: "You know yourself you can have no difficulties at all with (the child) but boy, the minute her mother's in the room she's just all of a sudden a different child and reacts in a different way to everything."

3. Twenty comments concerned with outcomes of communication for the child, have been classified into nine types, six being positive and three negative (see Table 99).

Seven parents commented on the childrens' attitude towards and primarily, appreciation of the parent-teacher relationship: "I think it means something for the children to know that somebody else is interested in them." "My son appreciated that I was there." "It's kind of nice for them to know that the teacher's talked to you about them. It makes them feel important." "I think you can keep school a more fun thing if there is an easy feeling between parents and teachers."

One teacher and three parents considered that communication helped bridge the gap between home and school: "It's their first year of school. I know for my own little boy he had never been away from home for a long time and I think it really helped bridge the gap from leaving the home and being in the school...It was helpful for him." "It's good for the children that are shy and not outgoing...All little children need their mothers I think."

Two parents expressed concern at the disappointment felt by children whose parents have not established a cooperative relationship.

Table 99

Outcomes of Communication for the Child

Zone

	1			2			3			4			5			6			Total
Childrens' Appreciation of Parent-Teacher Relationship							*	*			*		*	*		*	*		7
Bridging of Gap Between Home and School								*					*	*					4
Child's Disappointment Resulting from Non-Involvement						*										*			2
Cooperative Action to Eliminate Problems							*	*											2
School Attendance Improved																*			1
Resentment of Parental Time Spent on Administrative Tasks										*									1
Teacher's Awareness of Child's Likes and Dislikes													*						1
Varied Expectations Hard on Children																			1
Parents' Understanding of Child Improved									*				*						1

A parent and a teacher reported that the cooperative action of parent and teacher had more readily helped a child to overcome a problem: "In one case in particular there was a little fellow who was a real behaviour problem...I knew his mum well enough to say 'We've got to do something with him and it's going to have to happen fast', so we set up an idea where (the child) knew this was going on. If he was good or really tried not to be aggressive for a morning, I would praise him and I would send a note home to tell his mum and dad and then his parents would praise him. This worked really well, but it was with his parents' being so cooperative and willing to come in and talk to me."

One teacher was of the opinion that increased communication improved school attendance. Attendance was "at an all time high" or was understood by the teacher, so "hassles" were avoided.

One parent expressed resentment of time spent on administrative tasks for the program rather than with her child: "If you're on the executive...there's really quite a lot of work involved...in a way to me that tends to interfere with being able to be involved with your own child."

A teacher reported her greater understanding of childrens' likes and dislikes which enabled her to make provisions in program planning: "Things we'll do in the kindergarten that kids really like, I myself would never do it another year. Because the kids talked about it so much at home, I will do it."

One teacher felt that different expectations of parents and teachers for the children in the classroom were hard on the children.

A parent understands her child better and as a result is easier to live with was an opinion expressed by a parent: "I'm able to understand (my daughter) better because of the communication with (the teacher). I suppose its made her better able to live with me too if I understand her better."

Question 5

Thirty-six statements have been classified into eight types of comments related to the climate of the center for parents as shown in Table 100.

Three teachers and nine parents from six programs emphasized the importance of the teacher and discussed teacher behaviours in relation to the climate of the center for parents: "I think without a doubt, perhaps the teacher is one that creates the whole atmosphere, I really do." Teachers were described as being warm, friendly and outgoing: "(The teacher) of course. She's just a wonderful person. She has a warm outgoing personality. She's a very nourishing type of person, she really is. It rubs off on everyone. She almost has a magnetic type of personality--you are drawn to her--you want to do things for her." "(The teacher) is very friendly. She's enthusiastic about everything." First names were used: "She called us by our first names. I called her Mrs. _____ for a year and a half. She finally said, 'You know my first name,' and I thought I'd better start using it!" Parents were welcomed, introduced and appreciated: "(The teacher) is welcoming, 'Hi (parent)', and when you left 'Thank you very much', it was just

courtesy, but it made you feel, gee am I ever glad I came because she was really happy." "(The teacher) made it that you're very welcome every time you go in there. 'Hi look who's here'. She just beams... She makes a point of the children knowing just who you are, she says 'This is ____mum or ____mum'." "She gave us things to do or asked us if we'd like to do this or do that or just sit and watch, whatever you wanted really."

Three teachers and five parents from six programs discussed the encouragement given to parents to make them feel at ease. Parents were invited by newsletter to special events, birthdays and open days. In attempts to encourage fathers, teachers phoned to check if other men were coming. Parents were relieved of initial anxiety by the fact that the responsibility of the class remained that of the teacher and were encouraged and given confidence in their ability to be of assistance: "I really was feeling not so happy about my first classroom experience...now I love going with the kids...it doesn't bother me at all especially when we have (the teacher) along because she makes it very easy for the parents."

Preparation was made for parents: "I try and have it all ready for parents so they can just come in and start working." Younger siblings were welcome: "I was always encouraged to bring (a younger sibling)." One teacher and five parents of four programs noted specific factors related to the physical environment of the center which created an inviting climate for parents, chairs were available, coffee was provided. "There's always chairs and we can always feel at home there." "I try to give them time to have coffee and a cigarette."

One teacher and three parents from two programs commented on the fact that initially the center was strange and overwhelming for parents, who were apprehensive of unknown expectations: "You feel a little strange at first, it's a little overwhelming." "Some (parents) were quite self conscious because they didn't know what to do with themselves." The noise level and a large number of rambunctious children exhausted some parents: "They've got boundless energy. The first days I went to help I just came home exhausted...I just didn't know what to expect either. The noise got me."

Three persons indicated that the children were warm, friendly and interesting and that parents enjoyed seeing their development: "Most all the little children come to you, they must show you something. Some of them are very interesting little people."

One comment by a parent concerned the changed attitude towards an open door policy, with which parents are becoming familiar: "The door is open all the time." "Now it is starting to feel it is open and you can go in...You can go in to the room anytime."

One parent commented on the friendliness of parents: "(The parents) are very friendly. They're always willing to talk and take part in things."

According to one parent, his expectations for the childrens' behaviour were met. The children were very involved to the extent that they were unaware of him when he visited causing him to feel at ease: "The only thing that bothers me is when kid's are not in control of themselves and I didn't get that impression."

Question 6

Twenty-nine statements were classified into eight types concerning the various ways in which parents (teachers) had received (sent) information or made contact (been contacted). In most cases practices which were preferred or disapproved of were outlined or elaborated. Four modes were primarily one-way forms of communication (see Table 101).

In-person conversations resulting in two-way communication and deeper understanding were favoured by seven persons: "I think talking to someone is always easier than writing a note. You can cover a lot more material." "I think your personal contact in some manner is your best way of communication and this is why we try to get parents into a parent program." "I like to meet them individually." "I prefer talking to them...if you're watching somebody's face you can understand them a little better." Such occasions occurred as a result of involvement, parents' arriving early with children, field trips or individual meetings. A classroom which "is colourful and private" was thought by one teacher to be a preferable location in which to talk.

Newsletters presented at various intervals for a variety of reasons were seen to have advantages in that they presented factual information, were visible as reminders and reached all persons: "I think newsletters are the best...because they pin them on the children, you'd get the message, we didn't lose any...Whatever went on at the meeting and exactly what they're doing for the month, what to bring, what they're going to do, what to wear...everything's itemized right down. I just

Table 101
Various Ways of Presenting Information or Making Contact
Zone

	1			2			3			4			5			6			Total
Conversations in Person			*				*		*	*	*	*	*				*		7
Newsletters			*				*		*	*	*	*	*				*		7
Phone Calls			*				*		*	*	*	*	*			*			6
Home Visits			*			*							*						3
Verbal Message by Child							*								*				2
Notes															*		*		2
Importance of Orientation Meeting																*	*		1
Board Meeting Minutes not Read																*			1

pin it in my cupboard and it's right there and I can see it." "The newsletter has really been very, very popular. The parents are really anxious to get it every month. Even those who don't come to meetings or anything are most anxious to get that...to see what's going on and to be kept informed."

Phone calls, made at various times for various reasons were discussed by four teachers and two parents from five programs. They were extremely convenient because of distance or time: "The telephone is one of the most effective ways, because the distances are so long out here." "I do a lot of 'phoning' I'm on the phone everyday. However, a disadvantage was noted: "It seems that things can always be taken wrong on a telephone."

House visits, as observed by two teachers and a parent in three programs resulted in informal two-way conversations of a social nature: "I'm a great one for going out for coffee all the time and of course kindergarten comes up and we'll discuss it. This is one way I get feedback."

Verbal messages by the child were seen by two teachers to give responsibility to the child and opportunities for parents and teachers to have confidence in the child: "I think the kids always get the important stuff home." "I do like to send verbal messages. I think it's very important for the children to try and remember a message, it's their responsibility, it's a sign of independence and maturity that they can remember to tell their mother."

Notes, simply as a means of conveying a message, were considered useful by one teacher but least effective by a parent because of a

tendency for them to be misunderstood: "The notes, our reminders that we sent home on the kids, reminders for everyone to show up etc., that's sort of the least important way of communicating. You have to be careful of notes too, because people do misunderstand notes, so I would say that was the least effective way."

One teacher thought an orientation meeting to be most important since there was good attendance, opportunity for enthusiasm to be generated, information given and commitments obtained: "I think the orientation meeting is the most important meeting that you ever have in the whole year...I think that meeting is the crux of the whole program."

A teacher remarked that minutes of board meetings, because of their length, were not read: "The board meeting also sends out minutes and those are endless, pages and pages of stuff and the parents get turned off by board meetings and minutes and they'll never read those, so decisions that affect the class that were in the minutes, I have to put separately somewhere else."

Question 7

Fifty-six comments about communication as it related to the reporting of the progress of the child, were classified into ten different types (see Table 102). In some cases there was much elaboration of and comment on the methods used. Most frequently mentioned were report cards, interviews, informal discussions and provision made for parents to discuss children with problems.

Fourteen statements were made about report cards. Five were made by persons from two programs which did not present report cards. Two

persons had never thought of reports: "I never thought of (a report card)...It might have been a good idea, but it would put a lot of work on the teacher." Sentiment was a reason for wanting a report card: "I'd love a report card because my sister at (neighbouring town) has one and it's so cute. It would be nice to keep just for memory's sake, to stick in their books." Lack of parents interest or expectation for report cards for children at this level together with condemnation of the competitiveness they connotated were factors for their condemnation: "These parents aren't that interested in things like formal report cards. They are once they hit school but they don't expect it at kindergarten." "We don't have a report card, I don't know what their reason is, but as chairman I think it's a real dumb idea. You can't put a kid of that age through that, it's bad enough at grade one. At that age they don't understand that this one's at that level and this one's at that level. To them, they're all the same. You can't divide them up like that. You can't expect a teacher to do it. At that age they all develop at different stages, you can't judge one by the other. I think we'd have an uproar if we had one. I don't think parents would want it, because this program is in there for them to communicate with children and get along with other people. I don't think they'd agree with it at all."

Comments of persons from programs which presented reports indicated that from a sentimental point of view there was some approval, but such merit seemed to be outweighed by other limitations or disadvantages. Little real knowledge was given in a report card and on-going verbal interaction was preferable in working cooperatively to benefit the child:

"I think it's nice to have it written down--sentimental--but not to report...It's nice to look back and compare but as far as a regular report I prefer the verbal face to face because you're got a much better chance of working it out as it happens." "It's kind of nice to see it down on paper but what can you report about little kids learning this and that and play...there's no real knowledge comes out of it because you know the answer to those things anyway if you're with your child at all." "I wouldn't put too much stress on the report card...it really didn't tell you that much, it just said satisfactory." It was pointed out that it may not even present a true evaluation: "I always feel I don't know how much teachers know the children when they've got to make up a report card like that. I'm not sure how honest...It's always nice to know how the teacher feels about your child, but I feel I've probably found out as much by talking to her as the report she sent home." The written evaluation can be misinterpreted: "The school division, they print the report cards and give them to us and we send them out, it's a good thing to keep a check on just as keeping files but I prefer talking to the parents...I find it easier to talk to them than to put it down in writing because sometimes I don't find the right word or just one little word could upset them." A report card comparable to that in elementary grades was not expected: "I wouldn't care to have a kindergarten child under the same report system that a school child was under." Written comments were preferable to checklists: "We had report forms, they were strictly comments. I wanted to stay away from checklists...they're too hot or cold...Quite

a few parents told me that they really liked it." Written comments had a disadvantage of being time consuming: "I was quite pleased with it except that it's very time consuming."

Interviews were a subject of comment by ten persons from five programs. One program had not set aside time for parent-teacher interviews although the chairman thought it was a good idea: "We've never really set aside a certain time for them to come for interviews but any time they want to talk to us they know we are available." "I hope to see more time for (the teacher) to meet with parents. I'd like to see a certain time of the month set aside for parent-teacher interviews like the regular school where she could have one day that you would be talking, away from the children." Two programs made arrangements for interviews within a certain time period for those parents who wished to schedule one. It was not considered essential for those parents attending on a regular basis: "There was an opportunity for parent interviews if they wanted them. I didn't have many but I think that was because I did have quite a few parents coming in so I could talk to them as it was necessary about their children." "I didn't go, I went to the kindergarten twice a week every week anyways and I talked to her then. I said, 'Do you want me to come to this interview?' I said, 'I'm happy' and she said, 'Well that's fine' so I didn't go but if I had, had a problem I certainly would have gone." In three programs interviews were scheduled for all parents. In one program following the first report a teacher made arrangements to see all parents, going out to talk to them in her own time if necessary: "The first report that went out, she interviewed everyone and she was

doing that in the afternoons and some she did in the evenings. Some she went to where the mothers work and did it there. In another program two days during the year were set aside for all parents to come to the school and coffee was served: "For the ones who don't come in every day I think it's good...for me it was just another day because I'm in most days anyway." Another program made arrangements for all parents to come to the center on one one half day and scheduled ten minute time blocks which created problems: "Instead of one morning of kindergarten we scheduled interviews. They were supposed to be ten minute interviews but most of them were fifteen to twenty minutes because they had a lot they wanted to talk about, so there were lots what were disgusted because they'd come at their time and there was a long wait." Other disapproval was expressed in that program: "We did have some comments from parents who thought it was ridiculous to have parent-teacher interviews at kindergarten, that they aren't trying to achieve like they are in school so they couldn't see what sort of progress, what it was necessary for them to come in and talk about." Other parents both with or without regular involvement found it beneficial: "Some of the other parents were very happy with their interviews especially the ones who aren't in there all the time: "I enjoyed mine, I was real glad to to sit down and just for a few minutes not talk any about the running of the kindergarten but just talk about how (my daughter's) doing."

Ten persons discussed opportunities for informal discussion of the progress and development of their child and their value: "It was more informal rather than any formal type of reporting. It was just discussion and talk and we were told about the things that were happening.

It was better as it was considering the nature of the kind of education they are having at school. It was good." "(The teacher) always left it open that the parents could come and ask at any time about their children." "If you really want to know how your child is getting on in something I think you have to come to the classroom and check out with her." Progress was not discussed out of the classroom according to two persons: "Most of it they just as me...They never ask me when I go to their place or they come to mine. It's when they come down here to clean they ask me."

Provision for parents to discuss problems was a subject of comment by eight persons: "I don't think anybody should have felt that they had something that was bothering them that they couldn't talk about because I think they were given an opportunity." In some programs special or immediate provision was made: "I think there are two or three children who have problems and I know that those parents have been in to talk to (the teacher) about that at any old time." "If I found the child did have a problem I spoke to the parent right away, gave a set time quite often." "I've invited them quite a number of times to sit in while the program was going so they have a chance to see what we're doing in the room." "She would phone up whenever she was concerned about something, she wouldn't wait for us. When the problem was there she--not made you face it--but made you aware of it, she didn't wait."

Four persons described folders or scrapbooks which had been maintained in three programs for the purpose of revealing progress. Such documents were of interest to parent and child: "She saves all

their work so you can just look this up and see what they were doing at the beginning and how they've developed towards the end. It's interesting. (The children) like to look through it too, it's more interesting than a report card." "She wrote quite a lengthy report with their scrap books a lot of them that they had done at the end of the year and dated them so you could compare, like a drawing that my child had done in September supposed to be a person and another he did in May." "I've always kept files. I usually send their work sheets every month, ask the parents to go through the work and check and see if the child's making progress and if he needs any help to help him whenever they can."

Four parents commented on the on-going reporting that occurred as a result of parents being involved on a regular basis: "The mothers who went for work days, if you wanted to talk she was more than willing any time or she'd stay."

Two persons noted the visible progress from observing the child.

Two parents commented on the teachers' willingness to talk on the phone: "She was more than willing any time to talk on the phone after school."

Two parents mentioned special events or open houses as occasions on which they had been informed of the child's progress in the program: "I've been to an open house when they've had the kids' books out and she'll sit down and go over the child's work and tell you how they've been doing, or what they've been doing, or why they've been doing it."

One teacher described a newsletter which had contained samples of childrens' printing, an indication of progress in this area.

Question 8

Comments which the researcher had anticipated may fall specifically under the category of communication associated with parents' visits to the program on special occasions or regular days, were not distinguishable from those in related or overlapping areas.

Question 9

Seven classes of comments contained thirty statements made about communication related to parents' group meetings (see Table 103).

Ten comments were concerned with attendance at the meeting. Either personal attendance or the attendance of the total group which may have ranged from "rotten" to "very good" were discussed. "I think myself, I should have been able to have attend pretty well all the meeting if I could have. It does help you keep up with everything, instead of being left behind and finding out what's going on and what can be done to help out." "Some of those parents, it was hard to get them to come to our meetings." "I really would like to try and find something that would bring more." "It's been our experience that it's been very hard to get one hundred percent attendance." Such comments reflect a general concern over lack of, or poor attendance.

Seven persons from five programs discussed the function and emphasized importance of the initial group meeting. Generally well attended by parents and with school board officials and coordinators present, expectations were outlined, enthusiasm generated and commitments made.

Table 103
Communication Associated with Parents' Group Meetings
Zone

	1			2		3		4			5		6			Total
Concern Over Attendance at Parents' Group Meetings	*		*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*			10
Importance of Initial Meeting	*			*		*	*	*				*	*			7
Problems with Evening Meetings	*					*	*	*	*							5
Limited Participation as a Result of Babysitting Problems		*	*													2
Parents Well Notified		*									*					2
Attendance of Staff Members				*			*									2
Potential Appeal of Workshops	*		*													2

Five persons from three programs felt that parents were not partial to attending evening meetings for varied reasons: "I think most people aren't all that anxious to go out to meetings at night, they really aren't, especially if you're involved in more than one thing...working ones, if they work all day and have to get a baby sitter...single mothers, they may have very good reasons for not coming out anyway." However day-time meetings excluded all working parents: "Meetings were held in the evening always...if we had them during the day we were excluding all the parents that were working."

Two parents in one program were apologetic about their limited participation, resulting from babysitting problems: "Personally I haven't been able to get away to attend all meetings because I have two smaller ones at home...so whenever I can manage I get away--about three I guess, which is actually not all that good."

A parent and a teacher from different programs indicated that parents were well notified about meetings: "There's always somebody that phones or sends a note home or something."

Two parents in different programs mentioned the attendance of school staff, principal or teacher at parent meetings: "The principal was involved in quite a few meetings. There were a couple he did miss but if he could he would always attend." "The teacher was always there. Once she missed, she was writing an exam or something--something that she just couldn't get away from." There were different expectations for their attendance: The meetings were really for parents to discuss things. The teacher would come but they were really for parents." Two parents from one program spoke in favour of workshops for involving parents.

Question 10

There were seven categories formulated from forty-five statements about parent-teacher communication which attempted to inform parents about the program (see Table 104).

Twelve persons from six programs remarked that classroom visits, in their opinion, were the most effective way for parents to learn about the program: "I think the classroom visit is the most effective way of learning about the program. When I go to school I see what they do, how they play and how they learn." "Going there has really been the most effective way of getting information about the program." "Being there and being able to discuss it and talk about it." "Going into the class to help that really has helped a lot of parents to understand what's going on in there and what the child is doing with all these things and that the kids really do learn worthwhile things while they're playing."

Twelve persons in five programs discussed printed information: newsletters usually once a month, bulletins, notes, newspapers and the information contained there: "I always put all of our field trips and anything interesting that happens into the newspaper." "She sent a letter out every month of just about everything we talked about at meetings." "They bring home a newsletter once a month which (the teacher) makes up. She tells you everything pretty well that the children have learned in that month: what numbers they have done, what letters they have done, what sounds and things like that." Negative outcomes were that parents failed to attend meetings as the information was presented in newsletters and these were inferior to actual attendance.

Table 104
Communication to Inform Parents about the Program

	Zone												Total				
	1			2			3		4			5		6			
Classroom Visits	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	13
Notes/Newsletters/Bulletins/ Newspapers					*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	12
Special Events/Open House/ Field Trips						*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	7
Children as Informants					*				*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	4
Parents' Meetings									*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	4
Orientation								*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	3
Courses	*																1
Media														*	*	*	1

Seven persons commented on special events, open house, programs, field trips to which parents were invited.

Children, the things they do and come home with were a source of information in the opinion of four persons: "Through (my daughter) mostly because if she comes home enthusiastic the first thing she does is tell me what she's done during the day. Then they bring home their work constantly where you can see what they've done and the projects."

A parent and a teacher in two programs told about parents' meetings which had been sources of information.

Three persons described the orientation procedures which had served to inform: "Orientation was all set up. We had a registration day and then the teacher split the kindergarten into three groups, parents and children in one day. She allowed the children to just come in and do what they wanted and the parents would sit and talk with her. This was three days and then she went into the regular program from there, so I think the ones who went in got a good knowledge of what was going to be going on."

One parent recommended an inservice course similar to one she had attended: "I took an ECS' training course with (the teacher)... I think if parents were given a lot more information than they've got right now that would be good. Parents want help to understand, I'm sure they do, I know myself I did. They get them a colouring book and say now stay inside of the line; they don't worry about colours, but then say try to stay inside. They don't understand that in the playschool and preschool program you don't give them that diagram, you let them make their own. They can't understand this." The same parent did not

wish the teacher to be burdened with the responsibility: "Our teachers are so overloaded you cannot expect them to spend eight or ten hours a week explaining...I feel that our resource people should be used."

One parent noted that the media is a source of information: "They are receiving information...through the media. There's a lot of literature, there's a lot of journalism; it affects their attitude toward the program."

Question 11

Forty-three comments, relating to parent-teacher communication associated with parental involvement have been classified into nine categories as shown in Table 105.

Fifteen persons made comments associated with expectations for and general organization of parental involvement. From the individual statements it appears that no two programs approached it in the same manner:

1. One community program previously funded by PSS; had an LAC (a work committee) and made only periodic demands for parental involvement in fund raising activities, materials preparation workshops and parent education programs. An open invitation was extended to classroom activities but there appeared to be no scheduled participation on a daily basis: "If ten parents started wandering in and out in a day, I think that would interrupt the teacher's work." Participation was invited in special events and a Winter Home Visiting program organized by the coordinator during the winter break when the teacher was no longer employed: "(The coordinator) visited the mothers, asked them

Table 105

Communication Relating to Parental Involvement

Zone

	1			2			3			4			5			6			Total
	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Teacher's Expectations for and General Organization of Parental Involvement	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	15
Conversation Resulting from Program Involvement		*					*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	9
Activities Commanding a Good Parental Response	*	*	*	*	*	*				*			*						6
Discomfort of Teacher and/or Parents				*			*		*	*			*						4
Successes and Failure in Involving the Uninvolved	*												*			*		*	3
Responsibility for Making Decisions	*			*			*												3
Preparation for Assistance of Individuals							*												1
Discussion of Childrens' Progress							*												1
Discussion of Program																*		*	1

what they wanted to do. The mothers told her what they would like to do when the children came, and then she had the program done for us. She had it all stereotyped on a paper by the time we got it." "The executive meeting has a regular four to six parents attending. We do have a beautiful response as far as help goes. We put on a bingo last fall and we had a good turnout for a small community. We made over six hundred dollars. We've had the odd workshop that does bring in more than the executive meeting."

2. In a rural program which came under the jurisdiction of a school board and had an active LAC, the teacher conveyed her desire to maintain an open door. There was volunteer classroom assistance and volunteer participation at workshops: "Involvement was on an invitational basis. As far as (the teacher) goes, she wanted to see us, but if we didn't come she didn't say we had to or force us, so it was really left that the ones who wanted to, came." "If (the teacher) had something she wanted us to be involved in she would just involve the committee and we rounded everybody up." "Parents come to you and say 'What shall we do?' so I usually have workshops. I work a lot with puppets, so I need help to make these puppets. I send out a letter saying 'We're having a workshop and we're going to work on puppets.' I give them the material and show them how to do it. For the pumpkin reading center we had seventeen workshops. We worked at night, during school and over the Easter holidays too. For my own self, like puppet making and my activities, I think I had about seven workshops. When the (town) parade was started I wanted to have this float so I thought we would have a meeting first and find out if the parents would like to help with this. They all agreed."

3. A teacher of an established inner city, school board program attempted to involve parents, who were able or willing, in classroom activities on a scheduled basis and organized Parent Education programs. An LAC existed. "As far as getting people out to even help in the kindergarten it was very, very hard. (The teacher) had a sort of roster that she sent out at the beginning of each month, who would be in on this day if it was possible, and if you could make it and if you couldn't it was fine."

"I had an average of seven (out of eighteen to twenty-two) parents who came in to help me at different times. We started to have a chairman who was responsible and she really had difficulty getting hold of people, so I sent a letter home with a form at the bottom asking them to fill it in whether they were available, and if they were interested in coming in for what days--the whole works--and from there I would draw up a month's schedule and I would send it home with the children whose mothers were coming in and so they would get a month's schedule of what days they would be in. That worked really well because I found I could plan it because some parents were a lot more effective than others too and it's a lot easier if you're controlling that. At least in some ways you know who's coming in then rather than, well I wonder who's coming in this morning and what can I do that this parent is capable of handling or would enjoy."

4. A community program previously a private kindergarten, in a city, with an LAC and a teacher/coordinator, made periodic demands on uncommitted or willing parents to assist in program activities.

"In the past year fifty percent of parents were single parents,

seventy-five percent of parents both working so there were twenty-five percent of parents who were housewives at home, so of course when we needed escorts for different trips and so on it always seemed to come to the same shoulders. It was this core of people who did not have those other responsibilities." "For the first two days she asked for parents to help with the kids there, to help take them to the bathroom and just generally keep an eye on them but after that it was just come any time you like and there was nothing really drawn up. If she needed help say with transportation she could use them on field trips then the plea went out from (the teacher) who was also the coordinator to please come and help but it always seemed to be the same few that did."

5. Parents of a newly established, community Early Childhood Services' program, in a rural area who had interest in a program for their children, told of pressures from the social situation to involve them in compulsory operational tasks to maintain the program and periodic voluntary assistance with the childrens' program. An active LAC was responsible for many organizational matters: "You're interested in your children and in a small town there's only fifteen of us so we all had to do it. We don't get a choice of do we want to or not. In a small town people really have to work quite hard to keep it going. In a small town if one didn't help you know about it. There's a sheet drawn up and run off and we all got one and we knew exactly what was going on." "We're really a dedicated group and we really worked hard. We only had two parents who've been absolutely no good with everything being done on a volunteer basis, even the five parents who aren't actively involved in the running of the program, they're still good

to come in and do their share of the cleaning when it's their turn, bring cookies, take the kids on field trips and those kinds of things." "The parents haven't been coming in all that much other than for very special things. Most of them know when they come in what they're expected to do. I try and contact them if there's some extra special preparation for them to make, and have things ready so they can just go right ahead."

6. A community program, five classes previously a parent cooperative program, with a board and class parent representatives, obtains commitments from parents at an orientation meeting early in the year for scheduled classroom involvement, and other assistance as required: "The real contact with the kids is done on a rota basis. Parents go in and assist every day once every two weeks or something like that and the same with field trips and the same with surveys and the same with making things. It's partially drawn up at the beginning of the year and it partially arises because of circumstances. That would be the coordinators job but we dispensed with coordinator and asked the teachers to coordinate."

While many person had discussed active parental involvement in the program only nine addressed comments to conversation or relationships directly associated with the involvement. Most were positive: "I don't think I'd have got to know the teacher that well if I hadn't gone and after going I never hesitated to phone her about something." "We went to Edmonton and Storyland Zoo and there were quite a few parents along that time and (the teacher) seemed to be with each one and we seemed to get to know her that way." "The Winter Home program definitely helped

communication because naturally while you're with the children in the afternoon when something comes up you say, 'How come you do such and such' and then it gets the lines going." "We do communicate a lot when we do these things (assisted tasks) so this is one way we do talk to parents." "If I have to work beside somebody I have to be personal with them. I can't have a completely neutral relationship, I'm uncomfortable, terribly." In contrast, one person remarked: "We're busy, we're not sitting talking."

Six parents commented on activities which commanded a good parental response. "I would say all these volunteer activities are the best place to start, because meetings often scare people off." "Field trips was what sucked the parents in more than anything." "We do have a beautiful response as far as help goes. We put on a bingo last fall... we had a good turnout. We had the odd workshop that does bring in more than the executive meeting which has a regular four to six parents attending. We had a beautiful Winter Home program. I'm sure almost every parent was involved."

Discomfort experienced by either parents or teachers was discussed by four teachers: "I sometimes get keyed up when parents come in. It depends on the parent. You start to know your parents, you know the ones that are the critical ones and you know the ones that are just pleased with anything and everything and you feel much more at ease with those parents than with the ones that are watching you every minute."

Three persons commented on attempts to involve the uninvolved. In one program where scheduled classroom assistance was practiced

failure was reported: "There were a couple in one of the five year old classes that just refused you couldn't pressure them you couldn't do anything. We asked them if they would please have someone go in their place a neighbour or a grandmother and they just wouldn't do it." In another program where no pressures were exerted there was a similar number of non-participants, but a different attitude prevailed: "Now there's only two that we really have trouble with trying to get them to do their end of the doings and its a small town and you have to be very careful with people. In (neighbouring town) a note was sent to people who didn't clean. We would really have troubles. We have to be really careful about stepping on peoples' toes. We decided it was easier and better all round just to forget about it and not to make a big stink about it and make a big enemy and draw this sort of thing to the attention of the community." In two situations where an uninvolved family participated temporarily, the activity involved them personally. A special occasion at school associated with her child's birthday attracted one mother, previously uninvolved in any observable way: "One family that we've put a lot of effort into we've tried to encourage them in every way we know how, telephone calls, verbal, talking with friends to see if they would talk the family into better participation in the program and no response. The little girl had a birthday and the mother went all out. She bought a cake from the bakery at (neighbouring town) and she bought the fanciest party hats that we've ever had." A non-English speaking family was not actively involved: "We had really poor communication with one family, their mummy doesn't talk English and most of the communication has been done with the father,

he's the English speaking one in the family, but we have visited the cafe and the grandmother and mummy came out and daddy treated all the kids."

The responsibility for making decisions about the program was discussed by three persons. Some sharing of responsibility occurred in two programs where parents were consulted, but ultimately decisions were those of the teachers. "(Re field trips), I had ideas and anybody else who had ideas let me know. My field trip coordinator would phone and make the arrangements. I don't think you could expect the parents to do something like that all on their own and it's better to work cooperatively I think. I like to know what's going on." In one program parents were consulted, but had confidence in and left such decisions to the teacher. "We have sent out questionnaires asking if (parents) want something changed or what they would like to see done...I always asked for suggestions and they always said, 'You know best.'"

One teacher discussed the individual preparation of parents for assisting in the classroom: "Usually when they come in, in the morning I discussed it with them or said, 'I'd like you to do this' and explain what it was about. That was all we needed. They would usually come in before the bell and talk to me for a few minutes...I can't be bothered with signs with instructions. I find that making signs and charts is really time consuming...I would just as soon talk to them for a few minutes and explain it and then if they have any questions we can talk about them."

In one program a teacher told about how she discussed the progress of children with parents who were assisting in activities: "Usually at

recess time we'd discuss anything different that they had noticed in a child's behaviour or how the groups, the parents were working with, were doing in general."

A parent related a discussion concerning the place and value of field trips: "We had an interesting time discussing the merits of field trips. Some parents and some teachers think this is the sort of thing we should be doing when you say parents are involved. I wondered about field trips because I thought it was perhaps cutting into the voluntary activities that a child might be brought to by his parents or his friends ...This teacher and I we were questioning the value of field trips, because one parent had complained that she wasn't doing enough of this sort of thing. I sympathised with her when she said 'Field trips are just a divergence'."

Question 12

Four categories of comments were derived from fifteen statements about the effect of association with Early Childhood Services upon parent-teacher communication (see Table 106).

Most persons, nine, commented to the effect that the increased demand for parental involvement by Early Childhood Services had changed expectations towards involvement or parent-teacher relationships in comparison to their previous experience. Outcomes as a result of this were generally inferred to be positive as far as the extent of relationships: "There's definitely more communication than when I was teaching, I think their prerogative is the reason. When we were teaching you wouldn't have had parents come too often, maybe on a parent-visitors'

Table 106
Effects of Association with ECS on Parent-Teacher Communication[illegible]

day, but this is more than twenty years ago so it's not comparable."

"I've certainly been more involved in the kindergarten program than I was with my older children, because they all went under the old system where you didn't get very involved at all." "In South Africa the parent has to go to the office and find out from the principal if she could see you. Without the principal's permission you can't see a teacher in the school. That's our rule out there. When it came to parental involvement here the coordinator said, 'Try and get the parents in', so I'm trying, I've got the parents in." "They (ECS) certainly encourage it. If it hadn't been encouraged I probably never would have gone ahead because I was really nervous about it. Because they really do encourage it and because the principal encouraged it even more, then I felt I'd better have parents in." "(In a regular kindergarten program) None of us would have had anything to do with it other than (the teacher) coming over here three mornings a week or whatever and us bringing the kids in and out and paying the money to her...I think it's one of the best things that the Government's done for a while." One comment was definitely negative, one parent being of an opinion that Early Childhood Services had overruled parental autonomy in a former cooperative play school and reduced the amount of parent-teacher contact: "The difference is a third party who we imagine is playing an active role. I think the parents, myself included, imagine that Early Childhood Services demands certain types of programs and therefore we're not at liberty to make direct contact with the teacher and say look this is my idea is that your idea, because the teacher may say well I don't necessarily agree with this but Early Childhood Services would like us to do it this

way." Another comment from a parent in the same program discussed parents' increased willingness to be involved: "Some parents do realize, now that they're not paying, they could at least help out in lieu of actual money that they were paying before. Now that the Government pays for it they're more willing, even more willing than they were before."

Three parents discussed the improved status of the program resulting from programs in rural communities being approved and funded by Early Childhood Services. In one program which was now under the school system there were improved facilities. There was more administration-parent contact and greater acceptance of the program and staff by parents: "Now your Early Childhood Services is tied in with our educational system with a coordinator that doesn't have as big an area. That has helped communication an awful lot...another difference is the director of Early Childhood Services, he works through the school division. They were at our annual meeting, the director talked and talked the coordinator talked, PSS representative talked and I think the parents got (more information) at the annual meeting with the director talking about his job and why it was there and what it was for. Your pre-school is a lot more accepted and a lot more attended then it was before." "I really think it has made a big difference. I don't think it would have been as effective. They know this is a school program but if they thought it was just, not connected with the school it wouldn't be quite the same. I don't think you'd respect them (staff) the same."

Two persons noted that an interest in child or program stemming from involvement was lasting, but one was uncertain whether communication

would continue in later grades: "I think I'll be more interested in how (my child) does in school than how (my oldest child) did, but whether I'll have any more communication I don't know." A teacher commented on changing demands from recording parent hours noted that "they got interested and involved and when they (ECS) switched it to just child hours lots of them were so interested already that they just didn't drop it."

One parent did not know what effect, if any, association with Early Childhood Services had had upon parent-teacher relationships.

Question 13

Twenty-two comments in five categories related to communication resulting from the involvement of parents on the LAC (see Table 107).

Five persons from four programs noted the formation of a different, closer relationship, or friendship between parents and teachers compared to those with parents not on LAC and not involved in a working partnership: "Maybe a little bit closer because you're working with them...you get to know them a little better than a parent that doesn't participate in that line. I find you get so you know them better what you want and what they want and it gets to be quite friendly."

"Naturally parents on the LAC are bound to have a different relationship."

"She's a friend really, not just a teacher, she's your friend." "It's closer." "I think they would feel the LAC members knew the teacher better."

Four persons from four programs remarked that teachers and LAC members met or talked more often: "We meet once a month every second

Tuesday, the teacher and about four to six parents that are regular."

"I talk to (the teacher) every Monday I usually call her on Mondays and discuss anything that's coming up in the kindergarten. If there's any major decision we make sure we phone all the executive." One teacher remarked that though she meets the LAC more often the relationship is no different: "I saw maybe a little bit more of the people on the executive at meetings and everything, but there was no real difference (in relationship) between the ones who were on the executive and the ones who weren't."

Five persons noted that communication was different, parents being concerned with, or more familiar with administrative matters:

"Communication between teacher and executive members is definitely different because parents, I don't think, are all that interested if (the teacher) needs twenty-five dollars operating funds. They really aren't keyed in." "She (parent on LAC) knows what's going on, she knows the financial hassles, she knows the problems about not being able to order equipment because Early Childhood Services hasn't paid up. She knows more the problems that the teachers have because of the administrative structure." "We knew what was going on."

Four persons noted that LAC members were the interested, willing and active parents: "The people on the executive are mostly the active people within the kindergarten." In addition it was indicated that executive members may be those who don't work: "There are probably five or six who don't work out of all those parents and those are the ones naturally who end up on the executive."

Two LAC chairmen had advised the teacher to disregard parental exuberance or pressures, recognising that the teacher is the expert,

final decision maker and implementer: "There was one lady on the executive who had many, many, many ideas. She was bubbling over with ideas, we should do this and we should do that. (Our chairman) of course, the careful kind of person she is she'd sort of say, 'Now (teacher) make sure you don't get too much on the program. If you can't handle it don't get too many things.'" "(Our teacher) got an awful lot of advice from parents and I know some of the parents are teachers too, so after the meeting was over I said to (the teacher), 'I hope you're going to take all this advice with a grain of salt and go ahead and do it the way you want because you're the only expert that we have.'"

One teacher noted that parents on LAC are known sooner.

A parent discussing attempts to involve parents inferred some alienation with other parents who were unable, or unwilling to be involved: "We had to make contact with parents as members of the executive and some of them were almost outright hostile."

Question 14

Forty-five comments classified into different types discussed the inclusion of parent-teacher communication in the teacher training program as shown in Table 108.

Fifteen persons from six programs considered parent-teacher communication to be desirable at all levels in addition to kindergarten and all were in agreement to some extent that its inclusion in the training program could be useful: "I think it would be a good idea." "It would be a help I'm sure, I can't see where it would be against you."

Table 108
Inclusion of Parent-Teacher Communication in Training Programs

	Zone										Total		
	1		2		3		4		5			6	
In Favour		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	15
Not Opposed but no Immediate Suggestions	*		*					*	*	*	*	*	8
Use of Practical Ideas and Suggestions	*			*		*	*			*	*		7
Simulation or Real Experience					*	*			*	*	*		6
Uncertainty About Whether Communication can be Taught	*			*	*					*			4
No Suggestions to Offer					*			*			*	*	4
Attitude Important People Must Be Willing to Communicate				*					*				2

"I think it might be a very important thing. I think it's important in all cases. There should be more communication between parents and teachers at all levels really, but more so in this instance because these children are going to school for the first time. I think the teachers need to know how to handle the situation. Training might be useful." Some statements in favour were qualified: "If you could get a useful program it would be alright." The four teachers who responded were very much in favour and presented their reasons: "That would be really great, it really would, because you learn by trial and error and you can have a lot of errors." "Really teachers should be taught to communicate with parents because we are scared."

Eight persons, though not opposed to the idea could make no immediate suggestion to support their approval: "I don't know how they would go about it but it's probably important." "I wonder. I would think so, oh gee, I don't really know how to answer that one."

Seven people suggested practical types of ideas and knowledge to be given to teachers, and parents, to aid communication, ideas relating to initial contacts, welcoming parents and easing their apprehension about active involvement, the use of a classroom aide, conveying information about children to parents and involving the disinterested: "You could maybe give them ideas on how to get it going...If you could make films on communication and perhaps print up papers or something on how situations were handled in different places, so they would have guidelines on which worked and which didn't. For example if a mother came to one of the teachers and said, 'You aren't letting my kid draw pictures and you're letting him slop paint'. If you had a questionnaire

sent out on how to explain it. Perhaps this could be compiled and they could hash out their ideas on whether they thought the teacher did it wrong, or how they could handle it compared to them."

"Something that gives a teacher in training a basis to go on, because I had nothing to go on. I had babysat a lot but wasn't used to working with little children. At parent-teacher talks parents came in and told me what was wrong with the kids. I didn't have a clue what to tell them." "How to use a parent aide in the classroom so that it's rewarding for the parent. It can be very easy to use them so that it can be rewarding for the teacher." "Teachers should be forewarned to let the parents feel welcome." "If they could be made aware of the fact that parents are nervous about coming into a classroom situation very nervous and really don't know what they're supposed to do and want to be told, 'OK this is all you have to do' then the parents relax when they can see exactly what it is they have to do and know that they're not going to have the responsibility of the kids themselves." "I think you would need to take it right from making the first contact with the parents and what to talk to them about. How to present problems to them in a way that isn't tearing their child down, but you're saying this is a problem without being any bad reflection on them or their child. Maybe it should be a diplomacy course, which is really what you have to develop in working with these parents. Even for things like writing up your report forms, I sometimes found it hard to find a right way of expressing myself without either underplaying or overplaying a point." "How to get through to parents who don't really show too much interest."

Six persons suggested the use of simulation activities or experience in preference to theory as a means of training in parent-teacher communication: "I think there should be some simulation of the real situation. I imagine that a teacher in training could probably go out and train on the job and be present here, just as students who are coming in to education are invited to staff meetings. I think they're observers primarily. I think if it was a prolonged training session that students be allowed full participation in parent-teacher conferences which is what we've attempted this year." "A teacher should have the chance to work with the kids and the parents and then when interviews or talk-conferences with parents come up you had to sit in and give them. Re home and school meetings, make the trainer go to some of these before they're actually faced with having to be responsible for them. Go out and attend a few ones that are run well." "In University it was all theory, this is the same with parent-teacher communication. They've got to have a chance to communicate." "The kind of thing you could do is small group interaction. I think you've got to do it with actual real, live people, either by observation or by becoming a parent aide yourself, or role playing a pseudo parent aide yourself in an actual kindergarten program. Knowing how it feels to go in there like that there's all those kids bombing around and what do you do, and knowing how to relate to a large group of parents." Such experiences were thought to have value for parents also: "I think you would have to get the students together with a group of parents who are involved currently in kindergarten or who had been involved but I think it would be good

because it would teach the parents as well as the students. You tend to be more defensive. Any school I have gone into a parent-teacher interview with my back up knowing that nine times out of ten I wouldn't be able to get my point across and they probably couldn't either. You would probably come home saying 'oh gee why didn't I say that?' They most likely felt the same way about me and really they should be taught to communicate with parents because we are scared!"

Four persons were not certain that communication could be taught, it was probably something unique to an individual: "Communication isn't really something you can teach." "It's up to the person. If you set out to meet the people half way you're going to get them but I don't think anybody could teach you that. Nobody at university could tell you how to make friends. You could read Dale Carnegie's book but you have to do something." "I think it has to be in the personality for one thing. Some people have it and some don't."

Four parents had no suggestions to offer as it was out of their realm: "I don't really know, not going to university I wouldn't have a clue." "I'm no expert on it because I'm not a teacher and I'm not involved in that field."

Two persons remarked that persons must be willing to communicate: "I think communication skills can be taught but not unless they want to. If they're not willing to get involved then forget it I guess!"

Question 15

The seven types of comments incorporating ten statements concerning features which were special or unusual about parent-teacher communication

Table 109

Special or Unusual Features of Parent-Teacher Communication in the Program

Zone

	Zone						Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Open Relationships Established, Barriers Overcome			*		*		3
Small Well Knit Group and Community	*				*		2
Open Door Policy	*						1
Parents' Cooperation		*					1
Teacher's Willingness to Cooperate							1
Parent's Familiarity with and Ease in the Center		*					1
Experimental Small Group Meetings for Parents						*	1

in the six programs were positive (see Table 109). All were basically repetitive of responses provided to other questions but highlighted one specific feature.

Three persons from different programs remarked about the open relationships which had been established resulting in natural behaviours by parents and teachers: "I think everybody was quite open." "I think we've formed good relationships that we can be open and discuss things. I'm no longer afraid to correct somebody's child when they're there if the child is misbehaving. It takes quite a while to get to know them to feel comfortable that they can walk into your room and it doesn't phase you in the least." "Just our freedom of being able to get together. I feel free to phone the parents, they feel free to phone me and there's no restraint. Hierarchical structures were broken down: "In some cities you're almost afraid to talk with the teacher, some parents are, whereas here I'm just one of them. I'm involved in the same things they are."

Two people commented on the size of the community and parent group where people were in contact more often. This resulted in closer relationships with people being informed and involved: "I think the smallness of the group...It is because our group is so small and we all see each other so much that really everybody's informed of everything most of the time. It's funny here when you go to a dance, supper, shower, it doesn't matter where you go the kindergarten mothers are usually sitting together talking about the kindergarten." "I think it is a small enough community to be well knit and for there to be easy communication. Everyone knows what's happening in a small town like this."

One parent talked about parents' growing awareness of the program's open door policy: "I think our communication is well widened...We haven't been in the program that long and actually last year was better than the year before and I think it's going to get better with the parents realizing each year more that they can go in and talk to (the teacher) anytime or even phone her up. I think this makes a difference more than anything."

One teacher emphasized the parents cooperation: "Without them, and if they weren't so cooperative nothing could have come off this year."

The feeling was reciprocal as a parent in the same program remarked about the teacher's willingness to cooperate: "I think it's been (the teacher) really I think it has. I'm sure there are teachers who just wouldn't want the parents involved as much."

A parent noted the feelings of ease in the setting as a result of being encouraged to take part in a variety of things.

A teacher described her pioneering with small, class parent group meetings in the afternoons, when parents could attend and bring younger siblings. These were in lieu of large center, parent group meetings in the evening which were not conducive to interaction: "I feel that's the significant thing meeting your own class parents in a small group instead of the whole kindergarten board together."

Question 16

Eleven different types of comments were concerned with factors which had or could effect parent-teacher relationships. All except one were negative aspects. Ways of resolving situations were sometimes presented

(see Table 110).

A parent and a teacher in one program discussed the attitudes of parents in an inner-city location, parents being apathetic or disinterested with respect to activities outside the home, or merely too busy: "I think being an inner-city school most parents either don't have the time or aren't all that concerned." "There seems to be in the whole community a lack of involvement in anything."

The school's failure to meet parental expectations for a child was reported by a parent and a teacher in one program: "I only had one bad experience and that was when I sent the first report home. Father had expected their little girl would be learning grade one material in kindergarten and he wrote some rather nasty comments on the parent part of the report form." An attempt was made to resolve the situation: "I thought, 'I'm not going to deal with it by myself so I talked to the principal and counselor, and the counselor called to make an appointment to have (the parents) come in so we could explain the aims of the kindergarten to them.'"

A parent told of a personal problem: "My problem has been that I've been living in this town and working in another town and this creates a kind of problem where you don't know the community as well as you'd like."

A child's poor or non attendance can cause resentment on the part of a teacher: "The child hardly ever has one week when she comes to school everyday."

Debilitation of parents was seen as a problem by one teacher when she reported: "There was one coordinator in the area he had a meeting

Table 110

Factors or Potential Factors Affecting Parent-Teacher Communication

Zone

	Zone										Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6					
Inner-City School			*								2
School's Failure to Meet Parental Expectations for Child			*								2
Parent Works Away from the Community	*										1
Honor Poor Attendance of Child						*					1
Debilitation of Parents		*									1
Conflict over Decisions re Future of an Immature Child						*					1
Failure to Understand or Appreciate Roles						*					1
Traditional Societal Attitude: Education is Schools Responsibility						*					1
Many and Varied Demands on Parents						*					1
Demands on a First Year Teacher			*								1
Presentation of a Different Belief System						*					1

for all parents. He said, 'Come along to this meeting and I'll teach you how to buy educational toys for your children.' Well the parents were quite upset, they came to me and said, 'We have had lots of children, this is not our first child and if we want to buy toys we'd like to buy toys we'd like and not what the teachers tell us to buy'. They don't like things like that, so I keep away from them as far as possible...if I know it's going to hurt their feelings most of the time I don't tell them to go."

Conflict over a decision concerning an "immature child" was an area referred to by one teacher, from her experience with a parent whose child had not been a regular attender, was immature and unprepared to enter grade one: "There's one parent she and I are not on the same wave length at all and I find it really hard to appreciate her particular viewpoint. (Parent) said that (child) wasn't going to school this year because she's young, she's born in February and both my aide and I-- my aide's a trained teacher--felt very strongly that she shouldn't because she's very immature. I talked to (the mother) about it and she said, 'You know, you're quite right, she shouldn't she shouldn't have gone to school this year but she's having a good time doing what she's doing and that next year she'll be ready for a full kindergarten program to really join in with everything.' That was fine we appeared to agree on that and then as soon as they had the practice for school--they go for two weeks at a time to the school they're going to in the Fall-- there's little old (child) going along, 'Oh, yes, we've entered her for school'. It's difficult because she never told me that she'd changed her mind about how she felt that (child) could handle school."

Failure of parents to understand the teacher's role or responsibilities: "I think quite often on the part of the parent it's ignorance, for instance, if their child gets hurt--the teacher doesn't have eyes on every side of her head and accidents happen--they get very upset about it."

Certain attitudes and behaviours demonstrated by parents which place a program in a position of little importance were suggested by teachers to be areas or potential areas affecting parent-teacher communication. A traditional societal attitude that education is the school's responsibility and parents stay out unless there's a problem: "I think a lot of people have that idea that, 'My child's in kindergarten she's well protected, there's a teacher there, she's learning, what is there for me to stick my nose into'...I think some people have the old idea that we used to have to stay away from schools as much as possible except there was real trouble or an interview."

The many demands on a person's time: "Sometimes nowadays I think people have too many things to do, it used to be they were bored, they didn't know what to do."

One teacher discussed the concerns of and pressures on a first year teacher: "As a first year teacher it's hard because it's really upsetting to have somebody in seeing what you're doing all the time. It's just like student teaching...and you really feel it at first, I did, that you were afraid they were going to be critical because you didn't know them to start with, they were really strangers in your classroom and you weren't really sure what you were doing...So for my first two months I

didn't have anybody in...towards the end of the year it didn't matter anymore."

Imposure of a conflicting religion or different belief system was noted by a teacher: "Before (the program) was an Early Childhood Services' program it was a church oriented program sponsored by the church...we had simple devotional times...some parents could get really upset by things like that."

Chapter four has presented a descriptive analysis in tabular and written form, of both the questionnaire and the interview data.

Questionnaire data included the range and extent of communication practices in Early Childhood Services' programs, during the 1974-1975 school year and some influences upon practice. Interview data contained some opinions of selected teachers and parents about their communication and factors which had relevance to parent-teacher communication.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Chapter five, which presents a summary of the study, includes a restatement of the problem, the procedures used in the investigation of the topic and the findings of the study. Conclusions are presented and the chapter concludes with implications and recommendations for further research.

Summary

Restatement of the Problem

In 1973, Early Childhood Services, in keeping with a trend during the last decade to promote parent-teacher relationships, introduced parental involvement as a requirement for approval and funding of programs.

Two years later, at the time of the study, no research had been conducted to determine the range, extent or effectiveness of parent-teacher contacts in Early Childhood Services' programs.

It was hypothesized by the researcher that parental involvement was being interpreted primarily as active participation in the program by parents, and that attempts to achieve such involvement, which could realistically include only a segment of the parent population, could have negative implications.

Being interested in practices which involved, or had potential for involving all parents, the researcher chose communication as an area of

study.

Description of the Procedures

A mail questionnaire was designed to determine the range and extent of communication practices between parents and teachers in Early Childhood Services' programs in Alberta, during the 1974-1975 school year and some factors which influenced communication.

The questionnaire was distributed to teachers in one hundred and six randomly selected programs throughout the Province of Alberta. A stratified proportionate sample of community and school board programs from each zone was used.

An interview schedule was compiled by the researcher to elicit opinions from teachers and a percentage of parents in six programs about their communication during the year and some specific factors which had relevance to communication. The six programs were selected from those whose teachers had responded to the mail questionnaire.

Questionnaire Data

Distribution of programs surveyed and questionnaires returned. The response to the mail questionnaire from school board and community programs was 93.4%. Excluding three questionnaires which were not valid, the return rate of just over 90% which was used for data analysis, represented a high and relatively uniform rate of returns.

Assessing, recording and reporting the progress of the child. There was a lack of consensus with respect to the use of written evaluations

their being used by only just over half of the respondents. Preference for one format was revealed by almost three quarters of the teachers and written comments and checklists were the most common types in use. Almost half of the teachers presented written evaluations once a year, approximately one quarter did so twice a year and a similar number three times a year. The majority of written evaluations assessed the child in relation to his own previous performance. The Early Childhood Services' teacher was the most significant influence in determining the style of the written evaluation and school boards ranked next to a lesser degree. The majority of written evaluations had been developed for use since 1970. Distribution occurred most commonly by the child, or at a conference or interview. Almost three quarters of the teachers spent one half hour or more on average to complete one evaluation and only 7.5% were allowed any relief time from teaching duties to perform the task. Interviews or conferences were the most common method of allowing parents to respond to the written evaluation; next in order but of much less importance, space was provided for parents written comments on the evaluation.

Approximately three quarters of the teachers arranged conferences for all parents. Conferences were most frequently arranged in private, on a scheduled day or evening, and to a lesser extent at a privately arranged time at the center. Two thirds of the teachers who did not present written evaluations arranged conferences. Two thirds of the teachers were allowed relief time from teaching duties to conduct conferences. A similar figure reported the average length of one conference to be one quarter of an hour, the remainder being longer.

The majority of teachers arranged conferences once, twice or three times a year; twice a year being most popular by just over one third of the respondents. Just less than half of the teachers conducted conferences at the same time as other teachers in the school system, however teachers in school board programs did so more frequently than those in community programs. Parents, teachers and principals were most significant in a range of influences for promoting the use of parent-teacher conferences as a means of reporting progress. Almost all teachers shared two or more items with parents at conferences; samples of childrens' work being the most popular with checklists, anecdotal records, written evaluations and a file of the child's work next in order of use. Almost all the teachers were positive about the importance of reporting the progress of the child to parents and more than half considered it extremely important.

Observation was used by all teachers as a means of assessment. Informal tests, conferences with the child and memory were most widely practised. Formal tests were used least of all.

Over three quarters of teachers maintained records of the development of children in the program, checklists and anecdotal records being most popular.

Opportunities provided for parents to understand more fully the development of their own child and others. All programs invited parents to visit the program on some occasions; special days, open days and anytime ranking in order of popularity. Only 11.5% of programs never made provision for siblings to accompany parents. Almost all teachers

extended invitations to parents to observe the child in the regular program, but less than one fifth did so with the assistance of an observation guide. A large majority placed importance on the observation of children by parents in the program; over half considered it to be extremely important and a very small minority thought it unimportant.

The majority of programs provided opportunities for parents to learn more about child development; lectures/talks by guest speakers, newsletters, workshops and large group discussions being used most often. Just less than half of the teachers reported attendance by half to most parents and a slightly smaller figure reported that less than half to very few attended. Parents played the most significant part in initiating such opportunities in more than half of the programs. Early Childhood Services' teachers and coordinators were next in order of importance, but to a lesser extent.

Opportunities for parents to learn more about the curriculum.

Meetings for parents, a letter to parents, an announcement in the local paper and a visit to the center by the child and his parents were all methods of orientation, in use by over half of the programs. Over three quarters of the programs used two or more orientation procedures, from a range of practices which were in use. The Early Childhood Services' teacher had been the most significant influence in determining the style of the orientation procedures; parents and principals were significant but to much lesser degrees.

Parents' meetings and newsletters were the most commonly used methods of acquainting parents with the program, however almost three

quarters of programs used two or more methods. Visits to, or involvement in the program ranked only sixth in order of importance by only 11.5% of teachers. Newsletters were presented once a month by most of the teachers using them. Early Childhood Services' coordinators and parents were the primary influences in determining the methods used to acquaint parents with the program. All the teachers responding to the question were positive about the need for their informing parents about the program and over half considered it extremely important. Teachers perceived more parents to be well informed or informed about the program than uninformed, though approximately one third reported a few to be uninformed.

Assistance with field trips, parents' committees and voluntary involvement which were all used by over 70.0% of the programs were the most popular means of actively involving parents in the program. The majority of programs reported the use of two or more methods for this purpose. The majority of teachers perceived parents to be more supportive of the child's education as a result of their active involvement in the program. Some parents were perceived as being the same but approximately one fifth of teachers perceived a number of parents to be less supportive.

The use of the center and the climate of the center for parents.

The primary use of the center was made by parents for parents' meetings. To a lesser extent it was used for Sunday school, polling, evening classes and public health services. Two thirds of the programs were located in classrooms within schools; next in order of use were church halls. Teachers perceived most parents to be comfortable or extremely comfortable in the center, but about one quarter considered a few to be

uncomfortable. Over three quarters of the teachers used two or more methods to create an inviting climate for parents. Open invitations either verbally, by letter or phone were the most popular means.

Accessibility of the teacher and his/her relationship with parents and children both in and out of the center. Approximately two thirds of teachers had officially invited parents to phone the center, and about the same number sometimes received phone calls there. Parents' meetings or occasions before or after school were the most usual times for teachers to talk informally to parents; about half sometimes talked to parents at local stores and a similar figure during invitations to childrens' homes. Just over one quarter of the teachers lived at a distance of six miles or more from the center and a similar figure lived within a few blocks. The majority of teachers received phone calls at home from parents, but only about one third received them from children. Over half of the teachers reported never having had visits at home from parents or children.

Teachers most frequently contacted children out of school hours by sending cards or letters. Just over three quarters of the teachers were of the opinion that it was reasonable for them to be accessible to parents or children out of school hours, though many qualified this opinion. Informal notes were the most commonly used indirect means of making contact and the Health unit nurse was the person most often used as a mediator. Approximately half of the teachers preferred to establish a personal relationship with parents; just under one fifth a professional one and the remainder chose not to select an extreme position.

The use of instructional materials or visits in the home setting.

Approximately one quarter of the teachers provided instructional materials for use in the home and in just over two thirds of the programs these were delivered by the child. There appeared to be no one preferred time for presenting materials. Ideas for parents to use with children were most commonly used; childrens' games or activities for use in the teacher's absence and worksheets were of secondary importance. The Early Childhood Services' teacher was the most significant influence, and next in order of importance the Early Childhood Services' consultant, coordinator and parents.

Less than one quarter of teachers using instructional materials reported the use of home visits, but in the majority of situations where home visits were practised since 1973, the teacher had been the most significant influence in initiating their use. During home visits the teacher always talked to the mother, sometimes to other family members, but to father least often.

Interview Data

The responses of the twenty-five persons interviewed have been summarized and ordered according to the frequency with which they occurred and are classified into groups of five.

Question 1. Eight types of comments related to communication between parents and teachers during the 1974-1975 school year.

More than ten persons reported the majority of communication to be with mothers.

Six to ten persons discussed their positive feelings towards

communication, a range in the extent of contact from minimal to extensive and the informality of parent-teacher communication.

Five persons or less noted that contact was primarily person to person, an open door policy was developing and being recognised, responsibility to initiate contact was primarily that of the teacher and that communication should be differentiated from board room talk.

Question 2. Seven comments were made about the relationship established between parents and teachers.

More than five persons indicated that a relationship had existed previously between parents and teachers.

Five persons or less remarked that the initial relationship between parents and teachers had been uncomfortable, parents appeared to have considerable authority over the teacher, a range in the type of relationship existed, relationship with Early Childhood Services' teachers was more informal and relaxed than that with grade school teachers, LAC members were empathetic towards teachers and parents were shy at group meetings.

Question 3. Fifteen comments were made about the factors affecting the type of relationship established between parents and teachers.

Six to ten persons noted the importance of the teacher, an open door policy, increased parental involvement in lieu of traditional formal meetings and time spent together by parents and teachers in activities outside of the program.

Five persons or less discussed the importance of the teachers' interest in children to parent-teacher relationships, the need for compatibility between teachers and parents, teachers' recognition of

and respect for parents, parents' and teachers' willingness to be friendly and involved, the principal's attitude in being receptive to parents and supportive of the teacher in his/her endeavours to cooperate, the use of first names to overcome formality, a small community where people meet more often and are involved in common activities, parents' expression of appreciation of the teacher, a need for two-way communication and the age of the teacher--younger ones being friendlier.

Question 4. Eleven comments were made about the outcomes of communication for parents.

Six to ten persons had experienced that parents obtained greater knowledge, interest in and understanding of the program and established new friendships with parents and teachers.

One to five persons observed benefits for parents in their not being alienated from the child with his/her entry into the school setting, parents' satisfaction in being involved in a working partnership with the teacher for the child's education, the mutual cooperation in handling a child's problems, parents' personal feelings of satisfaction, enjoyment and accomplishment; their increased understanding of the child resulting from discussions with the teacher, the increased opportunity for parents to voice opinions or attempt to resolve situations and parents' familiarity with and ease in the school environment. Two negative outcomes for parents were the amount of time spent in administrative tasks rather than with the child and the extent of parental responsibilities for LAC chairmen.

Seven comments were made about the outcomes of communication for the teacher.

Over five persons discussed the eased pressure of the workload for the teacher.

Five or less persons remarked upon the benefits of parental support and encouragement given to teachers by parents, the improved understanding of the child; the stimulation, motivation and additional ideas supplied by parents; the friendships developed with parents and the improved understanding of the roles and responsibilities by both parents and teachers. One factor, seen as a negative outcome was the behaviour change in children resulting from the parents' relationship with the teacher.

Nine statements were made relating to outcomes of communication for the child.

Over five persons had observed the child's appreciation of the parent-teacher relationship.

Five persons or less remarked that the gap between home and school was bridged, cooperative action between parents and teacher could result in solutions to a child's problem, school attendance was improved, the teacher was more cognizant of the child's likes and dislikes and could accommodate these in program planning and parents' understanding of a child was improved. Three negative outcomes were highlighted: the extreme disappointment of the child whose parents failed to communicate with the teacher, the reduction in time spent by the parent with the child because of her involvement with administrative tasks and difficulties encountered by the child as a result of the varied expectations by the teacher and parents.

Question 5. Eight statements were made about the climate of the center for parents.

More than ten persons were emphatic about the importance of the role of the teacher and his/her attitudes and behaviours in establishing a welcoming climate for parents.

Six to ten persons drew attention to the encouragement give to parents and the physical preparation of the environment to accomodate parents.

Between one and five persons made comments about the center's being unfamiliar and overwhelming to parents initially, the appeal of the children who were warm, friendly and interested in their development, a recently developed open door policy, the friendliness of other parents and the fact that parental expectations for the childrens' behaviour were met.

Question 6. Eight types of comments were made about the various ways in which parents and teachers made contact.

Between six and ten persons described the in-person contacts which had occurred, resulting in two-way communication and deeper understanding; newsletters which had advantages in presenting readily available factual information and records to all persons, phone calls which had advantages where time and distance were constraints, but disadvantages as personal contact was lacking and conversations could be misconstrued.

One to five persons made comments about house visits which provided an informal social contact, verbal messages which gave responsibility to the child as a conveyor of messages to parents, notes which had advantages

as conveyors of messages, but disadvantages in being misunderstood; a well attended orientation meeting which provided opportunities for generating enthusiasm, presenting information and making commitments to the program and lengthy minutes of board meetings which were not read.

Question 7. Ten different types of statements were made about reporting the progress of the child.

More than ten persons discussed report cards. Five persons discussing programs which did not present report cards expressed approval for sentimental reasons and disapproval because of additional work for the teacher; lack of expectation for reports for children at this level and the competitiveness they connote. Persons in programs which presented reports were in favour for sentimental reasons and for their relevance in providing a past record, but disapproving because of their failure to give real knowledge; their conveyance of invalid information and their potential for being misunderstood. Written comments which were preferable to checklists were seen as time consuming. A report card comparable to that in the regular school was not expected. On-going verbal interaction was considered preferable in allowing parents and teachers to work cooperatively to benefit the child.

Six to ten persons made comments about interviews, informal discussion and provision for discussion of childrens' problems. In one program with no scheduled time for interviews, parents were aware that they could talk to the parent as they wished, but a scheduled time may have been desirable. In two programs where interviews were optional, no

pressure had been placed on regularly involved parents to attend. In three programs which scheduled interviews for all parents, one teacher had gone out of the classroom environment, in her own time to talk to parents; another served coffee in the classroom during two days set aside for the interviews and a third teacher scheduled ten minute time blocks which proved disadvantageous. Both disapproval and approval were expressed--the latter by an LAC chairman who normally discussed only program administration with the teacher.

Informal discussion best met the needs of parents with respect to reporting the progress of the child.

Discussion of childrens' problems was well catered for and immediate attention was given to a problem by a teacher by phone or in a conference.

One to five persons, discussed folders of children's work which were maintained to show growth and development, parental involvement which had provided opportunity for on-going discussion between parents and teachers, parents' awareness of the child's progress through observation of the child, ready accessibility of the teacher by phone for parents to discuss the child's progress, special events or open houses which had allowed for parents inspection of the child's work and discussion of progress and newsletters containing samples of childrens' printing which was an indication of progress in this area.

Question 9. Seven comments were made about communication associated with parents' group meetings.

Six to ten persons described concern over individual or group attendance at parents' group meetings and the function and importance of the well attended initial group meeting for generating enthusiasm,

presenting information and obtaining commitments.

From one to five parents described problems associated with attendance at evening meetings and those held during the day; apologetic feelings towards limited participation, resulting from babysitting problems; very adequate notification given to parents about meetings, the regular participation by staff members together with parental expectations for attendance of staff and the appeal of workshops for involving parents.

Question 10. Eight comments were made about communication designed to inform parents about the program.

Over ten persons were of the opinion that classroom visits were the most effective way for parents to learn about the program. Monthly newsletters which were useful as informants had disadvantages if used as a substitute for actual participation.

From one to five persons identified participation in special events, children by their behaviours or materials they took home, parents' meetings, the orientation meeting, inservice courses and media as informants.

Question 11. Nine categories of comments outlined communication relating to parental involvement.

Fifteen comments dealt with teachers' expectations for and general organization of parental involvement, which varied in all six programs.

Six to ten persons discussed direct communication resulting from parental involvement which led to communication in all except one case where work not talk resulted and activities including volunteer activities,

field trips, help, bingo, workshops and a home visiting program which commanded good parental response.

One of five persons noted the discomfort experienced by parents and teachers in initial encounters; the negative attitudes developed in attempts to involve the uninvolved in a program with compulsory involvement compared to those in a program with voluntary involvement and the success in involving the uninvolved in activities with personal relevance. Responsibility for decision making was discussed in two programs where parents had offered suggestions the final decision was that of the teacher and in another parents left all responsibility to the teacher who was viewed as the expert. Discussion occurred between parents and teachers in preparation for the parents' involvement in the program, following parental supervision of childrens' activities and concerning the value and importance of field trips in the program.

Question 12. Four categories of comments related to the effects of association with Early Childhood Services on parent-teacher communication.

Nine comments indicated that Early Childhood Services' had changed societal expectations for parent-teacher relationships compared to any previous experience.

Five or less persons indicated the improved status of both the program and the staff, the lasting interest generated in the child's education through the parent-teacher relationship and inability to answer the question.

Question 13. Seven comments were made about communication related to the involvement of parents on the LAC.

Comments made by five persons or less, included a closer relationship or friendship between teachers and parents as a result of their working partnership; greater frequency of meetings or opportunities to talk for teachers and parents on the LAC, the characteristics of LAC members who are usually either the active parents or non-workers; the support given to teachers by LAC chairmen against over-exuberance and pressures from parents; the early acquaintances between parents on the LAC and teachers and the endeavours of LAC members to involve the uninvolved which result in hostility between the two.

Question 14. Seven comments related to the inclusion of parent-teacher communication in teacher training programs.

Fifteen persons spoke in favour of parent-teacher communication as an area of study.

Between six and ten persons indicated that they were in favour of the idea, but could make no immediate suggestions to support their opinion. Others offered a range of practical suggestions including ideas for initial contacts, welcoming parents, putting parents at ease in the environment, using parents as aides, conveying information to parents about children and involving the disinterested. Simulation or real experiences were suggested in preference to theoretical knowledge.

One to five persons made statements indicating the importance of personality in communication practices, their indecision about whether

communication could be taught; lack of suggestions as the subject was alien to them and the fact that attitudes were important and communication was possible only if people were willing to communicate.

Question 15. Seven types of comments dealt with features of communication which were special or unusual in programs. All which were basically repetitive of comments made previously, were positive and were made by less than five persons. Relationships had been established and barriers overcome, size of community and parent group had resulted in increased contact and closer relationships, an open door policy, both parents and teacher cooperation and willingness to be friendly and experimental small group meetings which had been practised in lieu of large impersonal board meetings were all special or unusual features.

Question 16. Eleven types of comments were made about factors which affect parent-teacher communication. All were isolated comments except two, which were expressed by two persons. All were factors with negative implications for parent-teacher relationships. Included were: apathetic attitudes of parents in an inner city location, the school's failure to meet parental expectations for the child, a parent's working away from the community resulting in his isolation from the community and program, non or poor attendance on the part of a child, debilitation of parents by school officials, conflicting opinions of parent and teacher about what is best for the child, failure to understand or appreciate the role of the other, a societal attitude that education is the school's responsibility, many and varied demands on parent's time,

insecurity and pressures on a first year teacher and imposition of a conflicting religion or different belief system on a child by a school.

Conclusions

Questionnaire data. Based on the questionnaire data two questions are being answered in conclusion:

1. What was the range and extent of communication practices used by parents and teachers in Early Childhood Services' programs during the 1974-1975 school year?

The range of communication practices used by parents and teachers can be classified into two types: the more formal contacts which served the particular purposes defined in the study and alternative undefined purposes and informal contacts which occurred between individuals because of their situations and whose purpose was not defined in response to the questionnaire.

The study shows some evidence of the range of communication practices associated with the program at the center for the specific purposes of increasing parents' understanding of the progress and development of the child and of the program. In general these contacts are teacher or program initiated. It revealed a range of informal contacts in and out of the center whose purpose is not explicit, and limited evidence of contact in the home setting.

Communication related to the progress of the child occurred through the use of written evaluations, conferences and program visits. Communication related to the development of the child occurred through program visits and planned opportunities for parents to learn about child

development. Communication related to knowledge of the program occurred through orientation procedures, organized activities to convey information and active parental involvement. Additional communication whose purpose is undefined resulted from various informal contacts and through the use of instructional materials or visits to the home.

The extent of communication varied according to groups of persons and practices involved and will be outlined according to individual practices. The questionnaire does not reveal the extent of communication between individual parents and teachers.

Written evaluations, presented by approximately half the teachers to all parents once, twice or three times a year, were most frequently distributed by the child or at a conference. The written evaluation in the majority of programs, was an impersonal type of communication initiated by the teacher, in the form of written comments or a checklist. Parental response was most frequently encouraged at a conference or to a lesser extent through space on the written evaluation.

Conferences which were more popular than written evaluations were arranged for all parents by three quarters of the teachers; twice a year by a majority or once or three times by the remainder. Two thirds of the teachers who did not present written evaluations arranged conferences. Conferences were most commonly conducted in private on a scheduled day/evening or to a lesser extent at at privately arranged time. Most teachers shared two or three items with parents; the most popular being samples of childrens' work with checklists, anecdotal records, written evaluations and a child's file of work next in order. Information supplied by teachers was based on assessment made by

observation, informal tests, conferences with the child and memory. Over three quarters of the teachers maintained either checklists or anecdotal records. The average length of one conference was reported by two thirds to be one quarter of an hour and by others a longer period.

Provision for school visits which could serve to inform of progress, was made by all programs; special days, open days and anytime being the most common occasions. All programs allowed for observation of the child in the program but only one fifth did so with the assistance of an observation guide.

As in the former category, the study gives no evidence of communication resulting from activities for parents to learn more about child development; of which the most common were lectures/talks by guest speakers, workshops and large group discussions. However the attendance of parents; just less than half to very few in half of the programs and half to most in the remainder indicates that the potential for interaction would vary accordingly. The use of monthly newsletters by a majority of programs is indicative of teacher or program initiated communication addressed to all parents for this purpose.

Meetings for parents, letters to parents, announcements in the paper and visits to the center by the child and his parents which were all in use by over half of the programs as orientation procedures, represent attempts by programs to communicate, at levels both to or with parents, about the program. Over three quarters of the programs used two or more methods.

Parent's meetings and monthly newsletters were in use by the majority of programs as means of informing parents about the program and three

quarters of programs used two or more of a number of practices which included different communicative levels. Visits to the program for this purpose, ranked only sixth in order of use, by 11.5% of programs.

Active involvement as a means of parents' gaining knowledge of the program most often, in 70% of programs, consisted of two or more methods; field trips, parents' committees and voluntary activities being the most usual.

In the majority of programs direct informal contacts between individual parents and teachers occurred most frequently at parents' meetings or occasions before or after school and about half the teachers met parents and children at local stores or on invitations to childrens' homes.

About two thirds of teachers sometimes received phone calls at the center from parents. A majority of teachers received phone calls at home from parents and approximately one third did so from children. Teachers less frequently received visits at home, under one half reporting to do so.

Cards and letters were most commonly used by teachers as a means of contacting children out of school hours.

The most commonly used means of indirectly contacting individual parents was by informal notes or through the Health nurse.

Instructional materials, of which the most common were ideas for parents, games or activities for children and worksheets were used by only one quarter of the teachers and there was no consistency with respect to the frequency of their presentation. During home visits which were used by only a small minority of teachers contact was always made with

the mother and other family members to a lesser extent.

2. What were some factors which influenced communication between parents and teachers?

It is assumed that certain attitudes by parents or teachers towards practices influenced communication. Almost all teachers were positive and more than half considered it very important to report the progress of the child. Early Childhood Services' teachers, and school boards to a lesser extent, were the primary influences in determining the style of the written evaluations which in a majority of programs had been developed since 1970. Only 7.5% of teachers were allowed relief time from teaching duties to complete written evaluations which were reported by almost three quarters of those performing the task, to take a half hour or more on average to complete.

The use of conferences was influenced by parents foremost and teachers and principals to lesser degrees. Just less than half of the programs arranged conferences at the same time as schools, though school board programs were more likely to do so. Two thirds of teachers conducting conferences were allowed relief time to do so.

Any communication which necessitated visits to the center could be affected by both the attitudes of school personnel and parents to parents' being there. In most cases the Early Childhood Services' center, of which two thirds were located in schools, was not a particularly familiar environment as a result of extensive community use. Parents' meetings, Sunday school, polling, evening classes and public health functions being the alternative occasions on which the center was used. However most teachers had attempted, by use of two or more methods to

to make the center an inviting climate and a majority had extended open invitations to parents to visit, either verbally, by phone or by letter. In all programs except 11.5% provision was made for siblings to accompany parents. A large majority of teachers perceived parental observation of the child in the program to be important and only a small minority considered it unimportant.

Parents played the most significant part in initiating meetings to inform parents of child development. Early Childhood Services' teachers and coordinators had lesser degrees of influence.

The Early Childhood Services' teacher was the most significant influence in determining the style of the orientation; principals being next and lesser in order of importance.

Early Childhood Services' coordinators and parents were the primary influences in arranging opportunities for parents to gain knowledge of the program through meetings and newsletters, although all teachers responding considered their informing parents about the program to be important and over half considered it extremely important.

Conditions and attitudes could affect parent-teacher communication. One quarter of teachers lived six miles or more away from the center, a similar figure within a few blocks and the remainder at distances between.

Just over three quarters of teachers expressed an opinion that it was reasonable for them to be accessible to parents and children out of school hours, though many qualified their statement. Over half of the teachers preferred a personal relationship with parents, just under one fifth a professional one and the remainder between the two extremes.

Early Childhood Services' teachers, consultants, coordinators and

parents were the most important influences in determining the use of home visits which had commenced since 1973.

Interview data. Based on the interviews two questions are being answered in conclusion. These statements represent the opinions of a limited number of individuals and no conclusive generalizations can be formulated; however as they reflect favourable attitudes towards communication, based on personal experiences, some common feelings and patterns are evident:

1. What were some opinions of teachers and a random sample of parents from six programs concerning their communication?

Statements about communication in general suggested that the programs whose teachers endeavoured to initiate or encourage cooperation practised an open door policy. Attitudes towards communication which had been primarily informal and in person were positive. It appeared that communication had involved mainly teachers and mothers and that there was a range in the extent of contact between individuals.

Comments associated with the type of relationship established have suggested differences in the development of parent-teacher relationships; some persons having been acquainted previously and others experiences discomfort at a first encounter. Differences in the extent of communication were apparent from non or mere acquaintance to close friendships. A more informal, relaxed relationship was expressed between teachers and parents at this level than in grade school, which may have resulted from association in other than formal meetings, where parents remained shy.

A majority of positive outcomes of communication for parents, teachers and children were expressed. Statements revealed that parents tended to

become more confident, knowledgeable and influential participants in the educational system and the education of their child. Personal enjoyment and satisfaction was derived from a new role and from new acquaintances. Problems, were the encroachment upon time and overwhelming administrative responsibilities.

Teachers were observed as having eased workload and pressure, greater stimulation, motivation and support in program development and implementation. Additionally there was increased understanding of the child and mutual cooperation in dealing with problems; increased understanding of parental roles and new friendships. Childrens' changed behaviour in the presence of parents and pressures upon a first year teacher were considered to be problems.

A positive outcome for children was the link between home and school and enjoyment of additional and familiar adult participation in the educational setting. Potential for improved progress resulted from improved attendance, mutual cooperation in handling problems and increasing understanding of the child. Problems resulted from conflicting expectations for the child, a reduction of parental time available for the child and disappointment by children of non participating parents.

A range was apparent in the type and extent of contact experienced, from personal interaction in an isolated orientation meeting or frequent regular home or program visits, to impersonal communiques. Ranked in order from personal to impersonal, were face to face contact in program and/or home visits, phone calls, verbal messages, notes, newsletters and board meeting minutes. While the former had greater validity for effective interaction, the latter frequently served functional purposes

as efficient informants.

Statements were made about individual aspects of communication. Most commonly discussed with respect to reporting progress were report cards, interviews, informal discussion and consideration of children with problems. There was general doubt amongst parents about the need for, or value of reporting. A common feeling was that it should not be comparable to school reporting. Report cards were regarded with disapproval apart from any value they held as a record or keepsake. More positive feelings were expressed about conferences, although comments reflected lack of consensus. Greatest approval was expressed for opportunities for informal discussion including talks on the phone, provision for children with problems, folders of childrens' work and special events or childrens behaviours which revealed progress.

General concern over poor attendance of individuals or the group at parents' meetings despite adequate notification seemed to reflect an expectation for the attendance of all parents. Evening or day meetings both eliminated attendance of some persons, and babysitting problems others. There was approval of the orientation which commanded good response and workshops as a popular means of involving parents.

Of communication to inform parents of the program, classroom visits were favoured as being most effective and newsletters were considered to be value. A range of other methods suggested a variety of ways to inform; special events, open house, field trips, children, parents' meetings, orientation courses and media; the majority of which required active participation.

Comments concerning communication associated with parental

involvement suggested that in most cases involvement contributed to communication. Varied expectations for involvement on the parts of teachers were outlined. Regardless of the type or extent of demands on parents some uninvolvement was suggested and varied attitudes of parents towards this uninvolvement were evident. Certain types of involvement obtained better parental response. Success in involving the uninvolved was achieved by activities with personal relevance for the uninvolved.

If not a closer relationship; an earlier relationship was established between teachers and parents on the LAC. A different relationship was suggested because of a working partnership where there was increased contact and greater understanding by parents of the teacher's role. A division amongst parents was suggested, LAC members being active, non workers whose role in involving the uninvolved could cause alienation from other parents.

Special and unusual factors in programs highlighted an open door policy where open relationships were established, barriers overcome and parents were at ease. Parents' and teachers' willingness to cooperate and be friendly was witnessed.

2. What are some factors perceived by parents and teachers in selected programs and based upon their own experiences which have relevance to parent-teacher relationships?

Factors which were seen to have had positive effects on parent-teacher relationships were the attitudes and behaviours of school personnel, in particular the teacher, in creating an environment conducive to a positive relationship. Compatibility, time spent

together and shared concerns and interests were suggested. As with any relationship reciprocity was involved: open expression of feelings, mutual acceptance, respect, understanding, support and appreciation were seen to contribute to relationships. It was suggested that a non traditional open door policy, which was gaining recognition and acceptance, was conducive to relationships in allowing for parental participation and the development of a working partnership for the child's education. Younger teachers with such expectations were considered friendlier.

In consideration of the climate of the center, similar comments were made to suggest the importance of the role of the teacher in preparing the environment and encouraging parental participation to overcome parents' unfamiliarity and discomfort in an alien setting. Other relevant factors to the climate of the center were the friendliness of the children and other parents.

Early Childhood Services was considered to have had some impact in changing societal expectations towards parental participation and parent-teacher relationships and generating a parental interest in education which would be lasting. Additionally it was considered to have improved the status of both the program and the teachers, increasing their acceptance by parents.

Some favoured parent-teacher communication as an area of relevance in teacher preparation programs and offered practical suggestions or outlined areas for inclusion including: welcoming and encouraging parents and putting them at ease in the environment; encouraging the uninvolved, using parent aides and conveying information about childrens' progress.

Simulation experiences or real experience were considered preferable to theory. Other persons doubted whether communication could be taught and suggested that the personality or attitudes were the important factor.

Specific situations or circumstances were presented which had negative implications for parent-teacher communication together with conflicting values, opinions expectations of parents or society and teachers. Situations and circumstances included demands and pressures on a first year teacher, a parent's absence from the community and many and varied demands on parents' time. Conflicting values included non-attendance of children and presentation of a different value system in school. Conflicting expectations included societal expectations: parents of an inner city school considered education to be the responsibility of the school and individual expectations: the program did not meet the parents goals for the child. Conflicting opinions included different ideas for a child's future, hierarchical status of educational personnel leading to debilitation of parents or failure to understand the others' role and responsibilities.

It was apparent that in the interpretation of questions many parents, because of their experience, regarded parent-teacher communication as being synonymous with parental involvement.

Implications and Recommendations for Further Research

Evidence of the range and extent of communication practices as outlined in this thesis gives the Early Childhood Services' teacher, adviser and the teacher-educator a basis of factual information for

consideration of the topic within their particular context.

The study suggests that considerable effort is exerted in initiating and implementing a wide range of communication practices in Early Childhood Services' programs at the present time, explicitly for purposes of informing of the progress and development of the child and the program. The initiation of such contacts appears to be a major responsibility of the teacher or center, though varied informal contacts between parents and teachers, for undefined purposes do occur spontaneously. This implies a changing role and responsibility for the early childhood teacher. The information further implies that there is no one recognised, correct or desirable way to communicate and that awareness of a variety of methods and flexibility in practice may contribute to more effective communication and outcomes.

It is evident from the study that the extent of communication varies with individuals, situations, purposes and practices. While no attempt has been made in this study to provide an in-depth view of communication, or aspects of communication between teacher and individual parent or parents, such research could contribute to more thorough knowledge of processes and outcomes of communication in individual circumstances.

The use of conferences and written reports for reporting the progress of the child implies no one proven or preferred method for effectively reporting the child's progress. Program visits by parents might reveal greater potential as an effective means of reporting.

Program visits, parent meetings and newsletters which were used

as a means of informing parents about child development, suggest a concern to involve parents for this purpose and imply a need for both active and more passive approaches.

A similar strategy is apparent in the use of varied orientation procedures, parents meetings and monthly newsletters, in response to a desire to inform parents about the program; the implication being that this must occur on a continuous basis throughout the year.

A range of informal contacts suggest that the teacher may not only be, or need to be in contact with parents and children or accessible to them in a teacher's role within the classroom, but also as a person within the community or home. Further research might reveal the range or extent to which teachers have contact with parents and children in the home setting for purposes other than presenting instructional materials or for educational home visits which at this time are practised only on a small scale.

The varied influences on communication practices imply continuing experimentation in an area, where definite policies do not exist but are being moulded.

In the area of reporting progress, teachers, positive about the need to report, play the major role in determining the style of the written evaluation and in creating a classroom climate inviting parental visits; yet parents reportedly have the most influence in promoting the use of conferences. If the most effective procedures are to be utilized, teachers and parents who are influential in shaping practices, need to look at reporting procedures to determine why they are used and to what effect.

When parents are reportedly playing the major role in initiating opportunities for parents to learn more about child development it is

interesting to consider whether this is a result of Early Childhood Services' demands or parental wishes. Whatever the reason, the cooperation and involvement of the teacher seems desirable. A well versed and articulate teacher could direct parents' interests in a meaningful way to child development in the classroom and could enhance the parents' learning through direct experiences with personal relevance.

Though Early Childhood Services' coordinators and parents are perceived to be the most important influences in initiating parents' opportunities to increase their knowledge of the program, the teachers support of such practice implies a consensus of opinion with respect to its importance.

Preference by Early Childhood Services' teachers for a personal relationship with parents suggests that a breakdown of hierarchical or traditional roles has taken place in this setting and that the attitudes of teachers who prefer more than a mere classroom acquaintance, will affect relationships.

Interview data raises questions, issues and topics for further study. Early Childhood Services' programs have achieved a measure of success in establishing an open door policy, informal and personal relationships and positive attitudes towards communication in the programs concerned; nevertheless a range in the extent of communication was apparent and in the quality of relationships which mainly involved mothers. Such information implies that realistically one could not expect the same extent and quality of communication and quality of relationship between all parents and teachers. A survey into the expectations of Early Childhood Services' personnel or teachers in this regard might prove interesting, particularly where problems in communication

are being experienced.

Statements suggested a more informal, relaxed atmosphere and relationship between parents and teachers at this level than at grade school level, where formal meetings were seen to be the most frequent occasions for personal contacts. Action research conducted to improve the quality and type of relationships at higher levels could have desirable outcomes.

Where it was necessary to establish or develop relationships between parents and teachers initial discomfort had been experienced by both parties. To what extent this is common, anticipated, surmountable or serves as a deterrent to potential relationships would be interesting factors to consider.

In the programs involved, outcomes of communication were reported for parents, teachers and students which apparently outweighed any problems, though a number of these were cited. Further research might reveal the extent to which these are common, their effects or how they might be overcome. On-going research is necessary to assess the outcomes of communication.

A range in the types of communication methods in use implies a need for practices which encourage both interaction and efficiency in conveying information.

Comments related to reporting the progress of the child imply a need to look into the efficiency and effectiveness of the reporting procedures in use. If, as suggested, personal and on-going or frequent contact provides the most effective means of reporting and is occurring, why do fifty percent of teachers continue to spend time on impersonal written reports and seventy-five percent on scheduled conferences for

all parents? Is one routine method of reporting to all parents redundant?

Formal group meetings for purposes of informing about child development seem to cause concern because of poor attendance. The subject of formal parent meetings raises many questions. What is their real value? Why are meetings ill attended? How is attendance facilitated? What are the expectations of the organizers, are they realistic? To what extent do endeavours and frustrations outweigh potential gains? What alternative provision could be made?

As a means of informing about the program, classroom visits were considered most effective yet few programs had noted this as a practice for this purpose. Action research could facilitate classroom visits for this purpose and document the results.

Interview data suggests that teachers do have varied expectations for parental involvement which was widely practised. Research might be conducted into the expectations for parental involvement, considering the extent to which they are realistic; particularly in areas of reported uninvolvement. The data indicated that one means of involving the uninvolved was through an activity of personal relevance. This implies that expectations for involvement should be suited to each individual parent.

A suggestion that the local advisory committee member works more closely in partnership with the teacher and might become further alienated from other parents in exercising duties, poses questions about the extent to which such parents are representative and the reality of demands and expectations upon them.

Interview data revealed the importance of the teacher, amongst other factors as being critical to the establishment of relationships between parents and teachers and creating an inviting climate and an open door

policy. This implies not only a changing role for the early childhood teacher but additional responsibilities in this respect and raises questions as to what extent the teacher, in particularly the new teacher, is equipped or given the support to fulfill these expectations.

Early Childhood Services was reported to have had impact in changing societal expectations towards the parent-teacher relationship, which suggests that one of the aims of Early Childhood Services is being achieved at this level. Further research might consider the impact, if any, at higher levels in the school system.

Comments giving support of the inclusion of parent-teacher relationships in teacher training courses implied that a practical approach would complement, if not serve more adequately to prepare the teacher. However the recognition of the importance of personality and attitudes raises questions concerning qualities necessary for early childhood personnel and leads one to consider the possibilities of pre-selection.

Specific problems which were highlighted in relation to the establishment of parent-teacher relationships pose questions for research regarding the extent to which each is common or surmountable.

In chapter five the researcher has summarized the findings of the study and has drawn conclusions in response to the four questions which had been posed. Some implications for ECS' teachers, advisers and for teacher educators have been suggested and some recommendations for further research have been cited.

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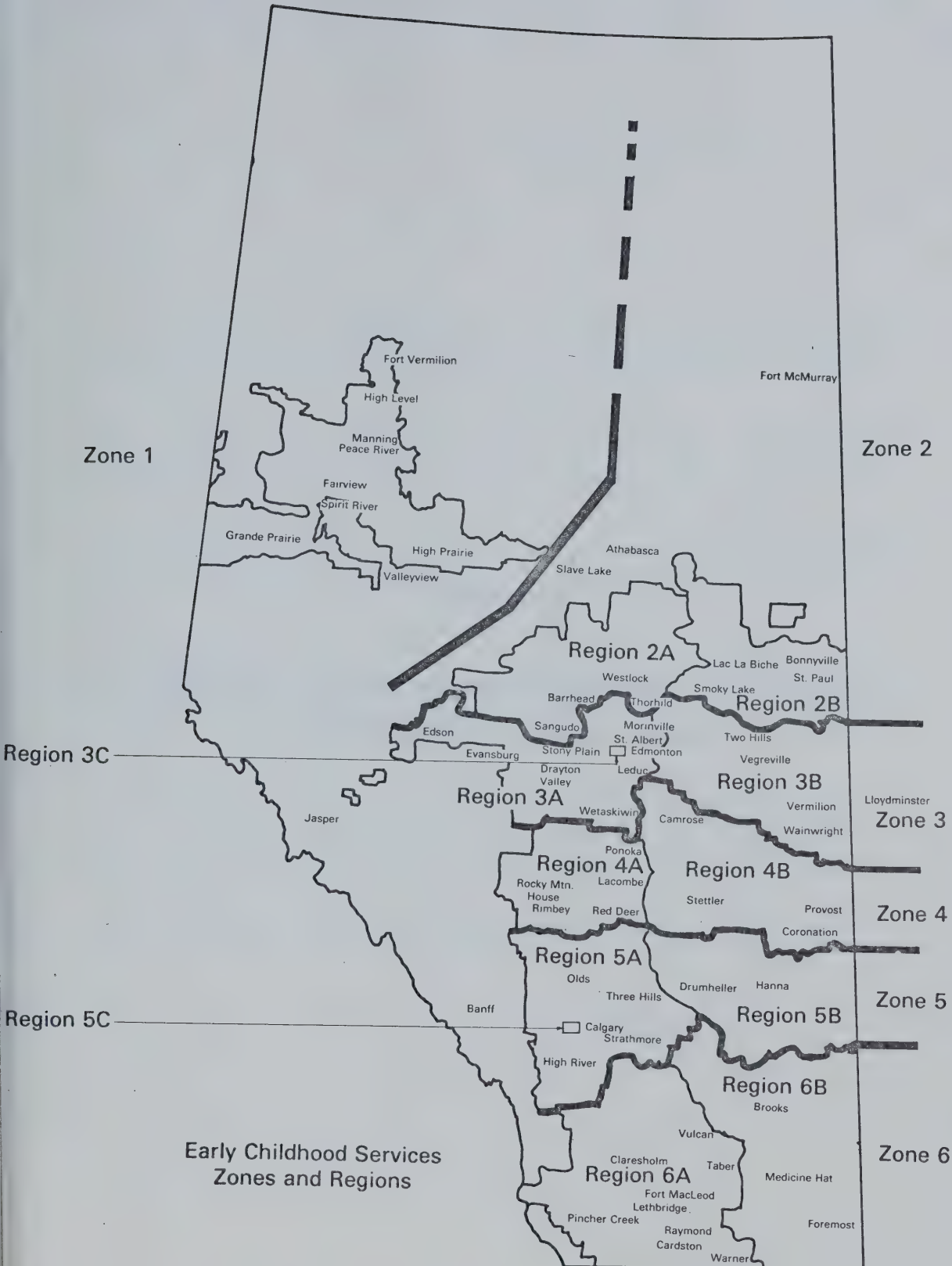
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

MAP SHOWING DISTRIBUTION OF
ECS PROGRAMS BY ZONES



APPENDIX B

LETTER TO ECS' CONSULTANTS REQUESTING ASSISTANCE IN THE SELECTION
OF ECS' PROGRAMS FOR INTERVIEW PURPOSES

#1408 8510-111 Street,
Edmonton, Alberta,
May 26, 1975.

Dear

As part of the requirements for an M. Ed. programme at the University of Alberta, I am conducting a study concerning communication between parents and teachers in ECS programmes in Alberta, during the 1974-1975 school year.

A total of one hundred and seventeen programmes in the province were randomly selected for participation in the study. The enclosed list indicates the specific programmes selected from your zone.

The enclosed questionnaire, which I am forwarding for your interest, has been mailed to the ECS teachers to elicit information with respect to the variety of ways in which parents and teachers do communicate and some of the factors which influence their communication.

At present I am in the process of reviewing the completed questionnaires with the intention of selecting six programmes--possibly one from each zone--which appear particularly interesting from the point of view of parent-teacher communication. In early June, I hope to interview the teacher and a number of parents from the six programmes selected, about their communication.

I would appreciate receiving any comments which you may wish to make concerning communication between parents and teachers, as you see it, in any of the programmes listed. Such information would not be used as data for my study, but would be useful to me as I attempt to select six programmes.

Thank you for your earlier cooperation in response to my phone call for names of teachers in programmes in your zone.

Yours sincerely,

Dorothy E. Howard

Dorothy E. Howard.

. APPENDIX C

MAIL QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PARENTS AND TEACHERS IN
E. C. S. PROGRAMMES.

This questionnaire is intended for
the E. C. S. teacher of the

E. C. S. programme.

Please complete the questionnaire by checking the responses ✓
which are relevant to your situation, for the 1974-75 school year.

Feel free to comment or add additional information wherever it
seems appropriate.

1. Do you present parents with any type of formal, written evaluation of the child's progress or behaviour?

1. _____ yes

2. _____ no

If the answer to question one (1) is no proceed to question eleven(11).

2. What type of written evaluation do you use?

1. _____ a report card

2. _____ a letter

3. _____ written comments

4. _____ a checklist

5. _____ other (please specify) _____

3. How often do you present parents with this written evaluation?

1. _____ once a year

2. _____ twice a year

3. _____ three times a year

4. _____ more (please specify) _____

4. In what way does it assess the child?

1. _____ in relation to other children in the class

2. _____ in relation to the child's own previous performance

3. _____ in relation to standardized norms

4. _____ other (please specify) _____

5. Who played the most significant part in determining the style of the written evaluation?
1. _____ the school board
 2. _____ the principal
 3. _____ a former teacher
 4. _____ parents
 5. _____ you
 6. _____ other (please specify) _____

6. When was this type of written evaluation developed for your programme?
1. _____ 1975
 2. _____ 1974
 3. _____ 1970-73
 4. _____ pre 1970
7. If you present parents with a written evaluation how do you deliver it?
1. _____ by the child
 2. _____ at a conference/interview
 3. _____ by mail
 4. _____ other (please specify) _____

8. On average, how long does it take you to complete one written evaluation?
1. _____ 1/4 hour
 2. _____ 1/2 hour
 3. _____ 1 hour
 4. _____ longer than one hour

9. Are you relieved of teaching duties to complete this written evaluation?

1. ☐ yes

2. ☐ no

10. Which of the following ways, if any, are used to encourage parents to respond to the written evaluation?

1. ☐ space for parents' comments on the written evaluation.

2. ☐ a conference/interview for all parents, at a scheduled time

3. ☐ a conference/interview only for parents who request it

4. ☐ other (please specify) _____

11. Do you arrange conferences/interviews for all parents to discuss their child's progress?

1. ☐ yes

2. ☐ no

12. Are conferences/interviews arranged only as a need arises, in individual circumstances?

1. ☐ yes

2. ☐ no

13. If scheduled conferences/interviews are arranged for all parents, under what conditions do they take place?

1. ☐ in private, on a scheduled open day/evening for all parents

2. ☐ in the presence of other parents, on a scheduled open day/evening for all parents

3. ☐ at a privately arranged time at the centre

4. ☐ at a privately arranged time at the child's home

5. ☐ other (please specify) _____

14. Are you officially relieved of teaching duties to conduct conferences/ interviews?

1. _____ always
2. _____ sometimes
3. _____ never

15. On average, how long is one conference/interview?

1. _____ 1/4 hour
2. _____ 1/2 hour
3. _____ 1 hour
4. _____ longer than 1 hour

16. How often do you arrange conferences/interviews for parents?

1. _____ once a year
2. _____ twice a year
3. _____ three times a year
4. _____ more than three times a year
5. _____ only as requested by parents

17. Do you conduct conferences/interviews at the same time as other teachers in the school?

1. _____ yes
2. _____ no
3. _____ not applicable

18. Which of the following, if any, influenced you most to use conferences/ interviews to communicate with parents?

1. _____ principal
 2. _____ parents
 3. _____ other teachers
 4. _____ E. C. S. coordinator
 5. _____ E. C. S. consultant
 6. _____ university professors and/or courses
 7. _____ in-service training/workshops and/or conventions for teachers
 8. _____ books and/or periodical articles
 9. _____ audio visual presentations i.e. films/filmstrips/tapes/etc.
 10. _____ other (please specify) _____
-

19. Which of the following, if any, do you share with parents at conferences/ interviews?

1. _____ written evaluations
 2. _____ anecdotal records
 3. _____ checklists
 4. _____ test results
 5. _____ samples of childrens' work
 6. _____ child's file of work
 7. _____ photographs of your programme
 8. _____ slides of your programme
 9. _____ films of your programme
 10. _____ video tape presentations of your programme
 11. _____ other (please specify) _____
-

20. How important do you consider it is for you, as an E. C. S. teacher, to report the child's progress to parents?

1. _____ extremely important
2. _____ important
3. _____ unimportant

21. What do you use to assess a child in your programme?

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| 1. observation | (1) _____ often | (2) _____ sometimes | (3) _____ never |
| 2. informal tests | (1) _____ often | (2) _____ sometimes | (3) _____ never |
| 3. formal tests | (1) _____ often | (2) _____ sometimes | (3) _____ never |
| 4. memory | (1) _____ often | (2) _____ sometimes | (3) _____ never |
| 5. conference with aide | (1) _____ often | (2) _____ sometimes | (3) _____ never |
| 6. conference with the child | (1) _____ often | (2) _____ sometimes | (3) _____ never |
| 7. other (please specify) | _____ | | |

22. What type of formal tests do you use, if any? _____

23. Do you keep records of the development of children in your programme?

1. _____ yes
2. _____ no

24. If yes, what kind of records do you keep?

1. _____ anecdotal records
2. _____ checklists
3. _____ other (please specify) _____

25. On which of the following occasions, if any, do you invite parents to see their child in the programme?

1. ☐ open days

2. ☐ sports days

3. ☐ special days (please specify) _____

26. Do you make provision for younger brothers and sisters to attend such functions?

1. ☐ always

2. ☐ sometimes

3. ☐ never

27. Have you invited parents to observe their child in the regular programme?

1. ☐ yes

2. ☐ no

28. Have you invited parents to observe their child in the regular programme, with the assistance of an observation guide?

1. ☐ yes

2. ☐ no

29. How important do you consider it to be for parents to have opportunities to observe their child in the programme?

1. ☐ extremely important

2. ☐ important

3. ☐ unimportant

30. Have there been organized opportunities for parents to learn more about child development?

1. ☐ yes

2. ☐ no

If the answer to question thirty (30) is no proceed to question thirty four (34).

31. How often have any of the following opportunities been provided for parents to learn more about child development?

1. small group discussion (1)___never (2)___once (3)___more (specify)
2. large group discussion (1)___never (2)___once (3)___more (specify)
3. lectures/talks by guest speakers (1)___never (2)___once (3)___more (specify)
4. lectures/talks by you (1)___never (2)___once (3)___more (specify)
5. audio visual presentations (1)___never (2)___once (3)___more (specify)
6. workshops (1)___never (2)___once (3)___more (specify)
7. accessible library materials (1)___never (2)___once (3)___more (specify)
8. newsletters (1)___never (2)___once (3)___more (specify)
9. other (please specify) _____

32. How many parents, on average, have attended such functions?

1. _____ all
2. _____ most
3. _____ about half
4. _____ less than 1/2
5. _____ very few

33. Who played the most significant part in initiating these opportunities for parents to learn more about child development?

1. _____ parents
2. _____ E. C. S. consultant
3. _____ E. C. S. coordinator
4. _____ principal
5. _____ you
6. _____ other (please specify) _____

34. Which of the following orientation procedures were used, if any, before the child entered the programme on a regular basis?

1. _____ an announcement in the local paper
2. _____ a letter to parents
3. _____ a prospectus/handbook about the programme
4. _____ a meeting for parents
5. _____ a visit to the centre by the child
6. _____ a visit to the centre by the child and his parents
7. _____ a visit from you to the child's home
8. _____ other (please specify) _____

35. Who played the most significant part in determining the orientation procedures?

1. _____ principal
2. _____ parents
3. _____ you
4. _____ other (please specify) _____

36. Which of the following, if any, have been used to acquaint parents with your programme?

1. _____ a handbook/prospectus
2. _____ a parents' bulletin board
3. _____ local radio/television programmes
4. _____ local newspaper articles
5. _____ displays in the community
6. _____ parents' meetings
7. _____ newsletters (please specify how often) _____
8. _____ other (please specify) _____

37. Which of the following, influenced you most to use those methods, to acquaint parents with your programme?

1. _____ principal
2. _____ parents
3. _____ other teachers
4. _____ E. C. S. coordinator
5. _____ E. C. S. consultant
6. _____ university professors and/or courses
7. _____ inservice training/workshops and/or teachers' conventions
8. _____ books and/or periodical articles
9. _____ audio visual presentations
10. _____ other (please specify) _____

38. How important do you consider it is for you, as an E. C. S. teacher, to inform parents about the programme?

1. _____ extremely important
2. _____ important
3. _____ unimportant

39. How informed do you think parents are about your programme?

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. well informed | (1) _____ most | (2) _____ some | (3) _____ a few |
| 2. informed | (1) _____ most | (2) _____ some | (3) _____ a few |
| 3. uninformed | (1) _____ most | (2) _____ some | (3) _____ a few |
| 4. _____ I am undecided | | | |

40. Which of the following, if any, have been used to involve parents actively in your programme?

1. _____ a parents' committee
2. _____ a car pool
3. _____ assistance with field trips
4. _____ voluntary involvement (please elaborate) _____

5. _____ compulsory involvement (please elaborate) _____

6. _____ workshops to make/repair equipment
7. _____ informal gatherings
8. _____ other (please specify) _____

41. How supportive do you feel parents are of their child's education, as a result of being actively involved in the programme?

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1. more supportive | (1) _____ most (2) _____ some (3) _____ a few |
| 2. less supportive | (1) _____ most (2) _____ some (3) _____ a few |
| 3. the same | (1) _____ most (2) _____ some (3) _____ a few |
| 4. _____ I am undecided | |

42. Is your E. C. S. room/centre used by parents/community out of regular hours for any of the following reasons?

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. public health services | (1) _____ yes (2) _____ no |
| 2. blood donor clinics | (1) _____ yes (2) _____ no |
| 3. polling | (1) _____ yes (2) _____ no |
| 4. evening classes | (1) _____ yes (2) _____ no |
| 5. parents' meetings | (1) _____ yes (2) _____ no |
| 6. Sunday school | (1) _____ yes (2) _____ no |
| 7. other (please specify) | _____
_____ |

43. Where is your programme located?

1. _____ classroom in a school
2. _____ specially designed E. C. S. centre
3. _____ church hall/basement
4. _____ community hall
5. _____ other (please specify) _____

44. How do you think parents feel about visiting your E. C. S. room/centre?

1. extremely comfortable (1) _____ most (2) _____ some (3) _____ a few
2. comfortable (1) _____ most (2) _____ some (3) _____ a few
3. uncomfortable (1) _____ most (2) _____ some (3) _____ a few
4. _____ I am undecided

45. The following are some ways in which teachers attempt to create an inviting climate for parents. Which, if any, do you use?

1. _____ a welcoming letter, inviting parents to visit at any time
2. _____ a phone call, inviting parents to visit at any time
3. _____ verbal invitations to parents to visit at any time
4. _____ a welcoming sign
5. _____ a bulletin board
6. _____ a suggestion box
7. _____ pleasant reception and waiting facilities
8. _____ a parents' corner/room
9. _____ a parents' library
10. _____ appreciation of parental involvement in the form of a certificate
11. _____ other (please specify) _____

46. Have you officially informed parents that they may phone you at the centre?

1. _____ yes

2. _____ no

Comments _____

47. Do you receive phone calls at the centre, from parents?

1. _____ often

2. _____ sometimes

3. _____ never

48. Do you have opportunities to talk to parents informally, at any of the following times or places?

1. before or after school (1) _____ often (2) _____ sometimes (3) _____ never

2. at parents' meetings (1) _____ often (2) _____ sometimes (3) _____ never

3. at local stores (1) _____ often (2) _____ sometimes (3) _____ never

4. at local community functions (1) _____ often (2) _____ sometimes (3) _____ never

5. on invitation to childrens' homes (1) _____ often (2) _____ sometimes (3) _____ never

6. other (please specify) _____

49. Approximately how far away from the E. C. S. centre do you live?

1. _____ a few blocks

2. _____ one mile

3. _____ two to five miles

4. _____ six to ten miles

5. _____ more than ten miles

50. Do you receive phone calls at home from parents?

1. _____ often
2. _____ sometimes
3. _____ never

51. Do you receive phone calls at home from children in your programme?

1. _____ often
2. _____ sometimes
3. _____ never

52. Do you receive visits at home from parents?

1. _____ often
2. _____ sometimes
3. _____ never

53. Do you receive visits at home from children in your programme?

1. _____ often
2. _____ sometimes
3. _____ never

54. Do you make informal contacts with children out of school hours by any of the following?

1. sending cards/letters (1) _____ often (2) _____ sometimes (3) _____ never
2. phoning children who are sick (1) _____ often (2) _____ sometimes (3) _____ never
3. visiting children who are sick (1) _____ often (2) _____ sometimes (3) _____ never
4. other (please specify) _____

55. Do you think it is reasonable for you to be accessible to parents/children out of school hours?

1. _____ yes
2. _____ no
3. _____ I am undecided

56. Do you communicate with parents through any of the following?

1. principal (1) _____ often (2) _____ sometimes (3) _____ never
2. school secretary (1) _____ often (2) _____ sometimes (3) _____ never
3. social worker (1) _____ often (2) _____ sometimes (3) _____ never
4. health unit nurse (1) _____ often (2) _____ sometimes (3) _____ never
5. psychologist (1) _____ often (2) _____ sometimes (3) _____ never
6. interpreter (1) _____ often (2) _____ sometimes (3) _____ never
7. another parent (1) _____ often (2) _____ sometimes (3) _____ never
8. informal note (1) _____ often (2) _____ sometimes (3) _____ never
9. other (please specify) _____

57. What type of relationship do you prefer to establish with parents?

1. _____ professional relationship
2. _____ personal relationship
3. _____ other (please specify) _____

58. Do you provide any instructional materials on a regular basis, to all children, for use in their homes?

1. _____ yes
2. _____ no

If the answer to question fifty eight (58) is no proceed to question sixty three (63).

59. In which of the following ways, are these materials presented?

1. _____ mailed to the home
2. _____ delivered by the child
3. _____ presented by you to individual children in their homes
4. _____ presented by you to a group of children in a home
5. _____ other (please specify) _____

60. How often are materials presented?

1. _____ once a week
2. _____ once every two weeks
3. _____ once a month
4. _____ other (please specify) _____

61. What type of materials are presented?

1. _____ work sheets
2. _____ ideas for parents to use with children
3. _____ childrens' games or activities for use while you are in the home
4. _____ childrens' games or activities for use in your absence
5. _____ other (please specify) _____

62. Who influenced you most to provide instructional materials for use in the home?

1. _____ E. C. S. consultant
2. _____ E. C. S. coordinator
3. _____ parents
4. _____ you
5. _____ other (please specify) _____

63. Do you make regular home visits, as part of your programme to present instruction/instructional materials?

1. _____ yes

2. _____ no

If the answer to question sixty three (63) is no proceed to question sixty seven (67).

64. Who played the most significant part in influencing you to make regular home visits?

1. _____ E. C. S. consultant

2. _____ E. C. S. coordinator

3. _____ parents

4. _____ you

5. _____ other (please specify) _____

65. When did home visits start, as part of your programme?

1. _____ 1975

2. _____ 1974

3. _____ 1973

4. _____ other (please specify) _____

66. Do you have opportunities to talk to any of the following when you make home visits?

1. _____ father (1) _____ always (2) _____ sometimes (3) _____ never

2. _____ mother (1) _____ always (2) _____ sometimes (3) _____ never

3. _____ other (please specify) _____

67. What is your teaching load?

1. ☐ 1/2 days, for five days a week
2. ☐ full time
3. ☐ other (please specify) _____

68. If you have an assistant, what is his/her status?

1. ☐ full time paid assistant
2. ☐ part time paid assistant
3. ☐ full time volunteer assistant(s)
4. ☐ occasional volunteer assistant
5. ☐ not applicable

Comments _____

69. How many children are in your morning class?

1. ☐ less than 10
2. ☐ 10-15
3. ☐ 16-20
4. ☐ 21-25
5. ☐ over 25
6. ☐ not applicable

70. How many children are in your afternoon class?

1. ☐ less than 10
2. ☐ 10-15
3. ☐ 16-20
4. ☐ 21-25
5. ☐ over 25
6. ☐ not applicable

71. How many years have you been teaching in this programme? (please specify)

72. How many years have you been teaching? (please specify) _____

73. During which of the following periods was your teacher training taken?

1. _____ 1973-75

2. _____ 1970-72

3. _____ 1962-69

4. _____ 1953-61

5. _____ 1947-52

6. _____ pre 1947

74. Have you an Alberta teaching certificate?

1. _____ yes

2. _____ no

Comments _____

75. What are your qualifications?

1. _____ less than three years of teacher training

2. _____ three years of teacher training

3. _____ a B. Ed.

4. _____ other (please specify) _____

76. What is your teaching specialization?

1. _____ early childhood

2. _____ other (please specify) _____

Additional comments _____

I would be very grateful if in addition to returning the completed questionnaire, you could send me a copy of a written evaluation, newsletter(s), or other items to which you have made reference.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Question 1. Would you tell me about the communication you have had with parents (the teacher) during the 1974-1975 school year?

Question 2. How would you describe the relationship you have established with parents (the teacher)?

Question 3. What factors if any, have affected the type of relationship you have established with parents (the teacher)?

Question 4. What do you consider to be the outcomes of parent-teacher communication for, (a) parents, (b) the teacher, and (c) the child?

Question 5. What are your comments about the climate of the ECS center for parents?

Question 6. How would you describe the various ways in which you have sent (received) information or made contact (been contacted) with parents (by the teacher)?

Question 7. Would you tell me about the way in which you have reported the child's progress (your child's progress has been reported) this year?

Question 8. What communication if any has resulted from inviting parents (being invited) to participate as a guest or observe the child in the program on, (a) special occasions, and (b) regular days?

Question 9. What communication if any, has occurred in connection with parents' group meetings?

Question 10. How would you describe the communication which has attempted to inform parents about the program?

Question 11. What are your comments regarding communication in connection with parental involvement in the program?

Question 12. What effect if any, has association with ECS had upon parent-teacher communication in your program?

Question 13. What comments would you make about parent-teacher communication which has resulted from the involvement of parents on the LAC?

Question 14. What is your opinion about parent-teacher communication being included as an area of study in the teacher-preparation program?

Question 15. Would you comment about any features which you consider to be special or unusual about parent-teacher communication in your program?

Question 16. What factors do you consider to affect parent-teacher communication?

APPENDIX E

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION TO TEACHERS INVITED TO PARTICIPATE
IN THE MAIL QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

#1408 8510-111 Street,
Edmonton, Alberta,
T6G 1H7.

Dear

As part of the requirements for a Master of Education programme at the University of Alberta, I am conducting a study concerning the communication which has been initiated or engaged in during the 1974 to 1975 school year, by teachers and parents in Early Childhood Services' programmes.

Yours is one of the Early Childhood Services' programmes selected for participation in the study. I would be grateful if you would complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to me within five days. A stamped addressed envelope is enclosed for this purpose.

The study is not connected in any way with the Early Childhood Services' Branch of the Government of Alberta and names of individuals or programmes will not be identified.

Please indicate if you would be interested in receiving a summary of the findings of the study, when you return the questionnaire and do not hesitate to contact me at the above address if you have questions or comments related to the study.

Yours sincerely,

Dorothy E. Howard

Dorothy E. Howard (Miss).

APPENDIX F

MEMO TO TEACHERS INVITED TO RESPOND
TO THE MAIL QUESTIONNAIRE

#1408 8510-111 Street,
Edmonton, Alberta,
May 19, 1975.



It may just be a rumour ... but
... before it becomes a reality ...

I hope you will return your questionnaire on
"Communication between parents and teachers in E.C.S. programmes"!

Many thanks

in anticipation,

Dorothy E. Howard

APPENDIX G

FINAL REMINDER TO TEACHERS INVITED TO
RESPOND TO THE MAIL QUESTIONNAIRE

#1408 8510-111 Street,
Edmonton, Alberta,
T6G 1H7,
May 27, 1975.

Dear

At the beginning of May, I sent a questionnaire on "Communication between parents and teachers in ECS' programmes" to one hundred and seventeen teachers in Alberta, with an invitation to participate in a study which I am conducting as part of the requirements for my M. Ed. programme at the University of Alberta.

I am excited about the response. To date over 70% of the teachers have completed and returned the questionnaire. I hope to receive as many completed questionnaires as possible, as a high rate of returns will not only improve the quality of my thesis findings, but will also make the study of greater interest and value to parents, teachers and educators in the field of early childhood education.

I am forwarding a duplicate copy of the questionnaire to you, in anticipation that you will check the responses which are relevant to your situation for the 1974-75 school year and return it to me. I am looking forward to commencing the analysis of the data in the immediate future and would like to include your responses.

If, for any reason, you are unable or unwilling to respond to the request to complete the questionnaire, I would be most interested to receive even the briefest note of explanation from you.

Yours sincerely,

Dorothy E. Howard

Dorothy E. Howard.

APPENDIX H

SAMPLE LETTER SENT TO TEACHERS INVITING
PARTICIPATION IN AN INTERVIEW

#1408 8510-111 Street,
Edmonton, Alberta,
T6G 1H7,
June 1, 1975.

Dear

Very many thanks for your cooperation in completing and returning the questionnaire I sent you. I was most interested in your comments and would really like to have an opportunity to talk to you.

I'm delighted with the response which I have received from ECS' teachers in connection with my study. To date eighty-four of the one hundred and six questionnaires which I mailed at the beginning of May have been returned and I am now in the process of recording data and preparing for the next phase of my study.

I plan to visit the teachers and a random sample of parents from six programmes. One programme has been selected from each zone on the basis of "varied and interesting communication practices and/or ideas". The purpose of the visits, which will take place within the next three weeks, will be to discuss and obtain opinions about parent-teacher communication.

I wonder if you would be interested in continuing your involvement in this part of the study. I will contact you by 'phone in the near future to discuss it with you in greater detail. I hope you will give it your consideration and that your response will be a positive one.

Yours sincerely,

Dorothy E. Howard

Dorothy E. Howard.

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